In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire

Ming China and Eurasia

David M. Robinson

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During the thirteenth century, the Mongols created the greatest empire in human history. Genghis Khan and his successors brought death and destruction to Eurasia. They obliterated infrastructure, devastated cities, and exterminated peoples. They also created courts in China, Persia, and southern Russia, famed throughout the world as centers of wealth, learning, power, religion, and lavish spectacle. The great Mongol houses established standards by which future rulers in Eurasia would measure themselves for centuries. In this ambitious study, David M. Robinson traces how in the late fourteenth century the newly established Ming dynasty (1368–1644) in China crafted a narrative of the fallen Mongol empire. To shape the perceptions and actions of audiences at home and abroad, the Ming court tailored its narrative of the Mongols to prove that it was the rightful successor to the Mongol empire. This is a story of how politicians exploit historical memory for their own gain.

DAVID M. ROBINSON is Robert H. N. Ho Professor in Asian Studies and Professor of History at Colgate University in New York State. He is widely published, including *Seeking Order in a Tumultuous Age: The Writings of Chŏng Tojŏn, A Korean Neo-Confucian*, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court, Empire's Twilight: Northeast Asia under the Mongols*, and *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China*.

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For Emily

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Abbreviations

Annals	Choi Byonghyon, *The Annals of King T'aejo*
BTGZ	*Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan*
CHC	*Cambridge History of China*
CWS	*Chosŏn wangjo sillok T'aejo sillok*
DMB	Goodrich and Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*
DMTZ	Zhu Yuanzhang, *Da Ming Taizu huangdi yu zhi ji*
DVSK	*Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (Chongqing and Beijing, 2015 edition)
EHHWZ	Sun Jimin, ed., *E cang Heishuicheng Hanwen fei Fojiao wenxian zhengli*
EHWX	*E cang Heishuicheng wenxian*
GCDG	Deng Shilong, ed., *Guo chao dian gu*
GCXZ	Jiao Hong, ed., *Guo chao xian zheng lu*
GQ	Tan Qian, *Guo que*
HCW	Li Yiyou, ed., *Heicheng chutu wenshu*
HFLB	*Han fen lou bi ji*
HGMJ	*Han'guk munjip ch'onggan,*
HGYT	*Han'guk Yŏktae munjip ch'ongsŏ*
HMZL	Fu Fengxiang, ed., *Huang Ming zhao ling*
HMZZ	Kong Zhenyun, ed., *Huang Ming zhao zhi*
HSCYSP	*Eluosi guoli Aiermitashi bowuguan cang Heishucheng yishupin*
HYYY	*Hua yi yi yu*
JSLJZ	Li Xinfeng, *Jishilu jianzheng*
KS	*Koryŏsa*
KSCY	*Koryŏsa choryŏ*
MCKG	*Mingchao kaiguo wenxian*
MHWYB	Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Hongwu yubi*
MS	Zhang Tingyu, et al., eds., *Ming shi*
MSSL	Yang Xueke, *Ming shi shi lu*
MTHQ	Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Taizu huangdi qinlu*
MTZSL	*Ming Taizu shilu*
MYZSL	*Ming Yingzong shilu*
MZZC	*Mingdai zhuanji ziliao congkan*

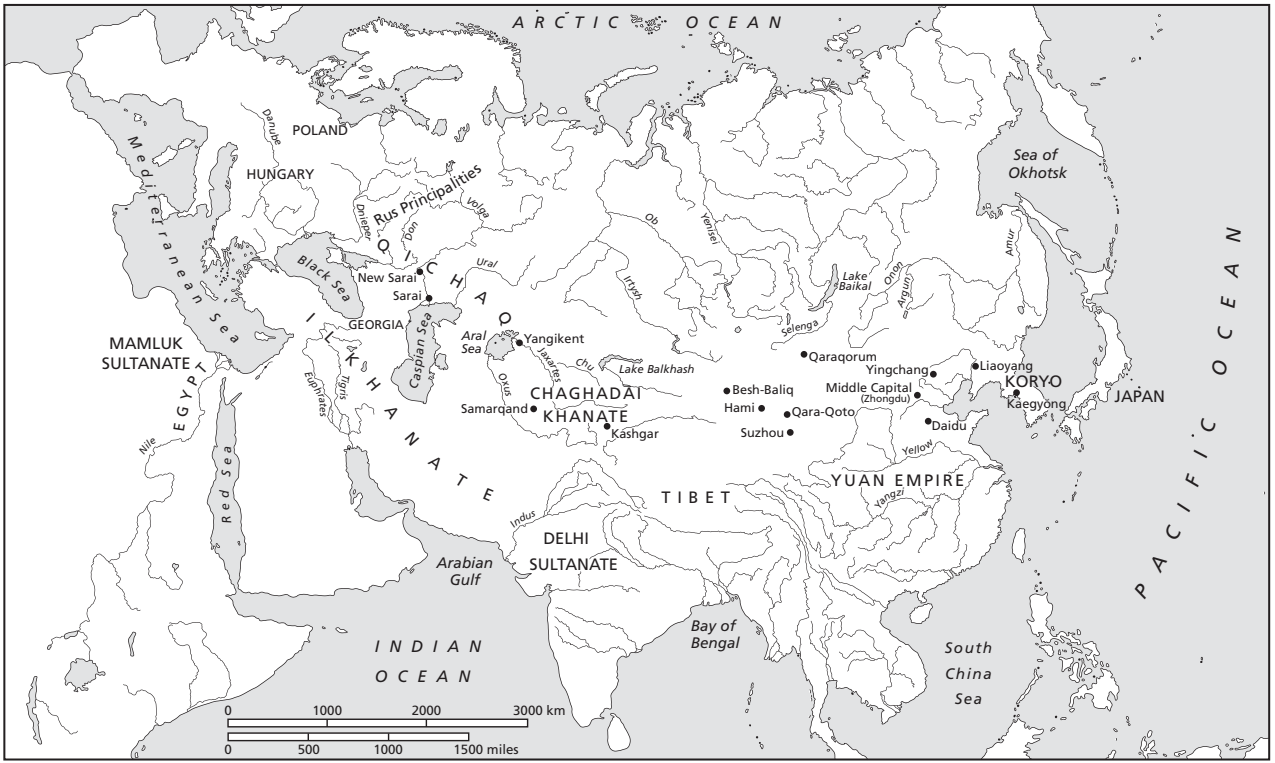
NCL	Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ni chen lu*
SKCM	*Sikuan Quanshu cunmu congshu*
SKJH	*Siku quanshu jinhuishu congkan*
SLQJ	Song Lian, *Song Lian quan ji*
XLZC	*Xiaoling zhao chi*
XXSK	*Xuxiu Siku quanshu*
YHB	Shen Defu, *Wanli yehuo bian*
YS	Song Lian, et al., eds., *Yuan shi*
YSC	*Yunnan shiliao congkan*
YSTBJ	Wang Shizhen, *Yanshantang bie ji*
YWHJ	*Yuwai Hanji zhenben wenku*
YYZH	*Yuanshi yanjiu ziliao huibian*
ZHW	*Zhongguo cang Heishuicheng wenxian*

Introduction

This book explores how the world's most powerful court told the story of history's greatest empire. It traces how in the late fourteenth century the newly established Ming court (1368–1644) in China crafted a narrative of the fallen Mongol empire. The Ming court used this narrative to advance its military, political, and diplomatic objectives by shaping the perceptions and actions of audiences at home and abroad.

During the thirteenth century, the Mongols created the greatest empire in human history (Map I.1). Genghis Khan (or as he will appear here "Chinggis Khan," 1162–1227) and his successors brought death and destruction to Eurasia on a horrific scale. The Mongols destroyed vital infrastructure, massacred whole cities, and exterminated entire peoples. They also created courts in China, Persia, and southern Russia famed throughout the world as centers of learning, religion, and lavish spectacle. The great Mongol houses established standards by which future rulers in Eurasia would measure themselves for centuries. Mongol rule quickened technological, personnel, and artistic exchanges across diverse fields. Chinese painting styles, Persian systems of taxation, Central Asian administrators, and Arabic medical traditions, to name just a few, spread widely across Eurasia, sparking innovation and appropriation.[1] When the Mongol empire fell, networks that facilitated such interaction deteriorated but did not vanish. Long after the Mongols' power faded, memory – in textual, material, visual, and oral form – of their rule continued to churn: ghastly violence, humiliating oppression, fabled wealth, cultural florescence, expanded horizons. Analogous issues of clashing perceptions and historical memory arose in the wake of the Assyrian, Persian, Roman, Carolingian, Habsburg, British, and other empires. Over the centuries, resolutions to such questions have affected historical understanding and shaped political landscapes.

[1] Related scholarship is voluminous and ever expanding. For brief review, see May, *Mongol Conquests*, pp. 232–56.



Map I.1 Mongol Empire

Scholars rightly stress the Mongol empire's lasting impact on later ages. They draw attention to the empire's contribution to ethnic identity, Islam's growth, firearms' spread, an emerging early modern global economy, Western Europe's rise, and other epochal developments.[2] Others have traced the Mongol empire's institutional and ideological legacy, through examination of the imperial bodyguard and the postal relay system, or the continuing relevance of Chinggisid charisma as seen in the law codes of the first-generation regimes that grew out of the empire's ashes, such as the Ming dynasty, Timurids, and Muscovite Rus, as well as down-stream polities like the Mughals, the Safavids, the Zünghars, and the Qing dynasty.[3]

Here I tell a different story. Rather than emphasize how the Mongol empire shaped those who followed in its wake, I trace how ambitious men and women throughout Eurasia confronted a common challenge: how to use the Mongol legacy. This legacy included memory, institutions, and personnel networks of the fallen empire. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Eurasian rulers and their courts selectively appropriated elements of the Mongol legacy to advance their interests.

My particular focus is how the early Ming court told the tale of the Mongol empire at home and abroad. Early Ming here refers to the three decades immediately following the Mongol withdrawal from China. From 1368 to 1398, the Ming founding emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–98), ruled China from his capital in today's Nanjing. Zhu Yuanzhang was an exceptional ruler, even among the select company of Chinese founding emperors. His decisions deeply shaped the Ming dynasty's political culture and institutions; they also touched much of Eurasia. His voice figures prominently in this book. However, his personal views are inseparable from his age. Zhu Yuanzhang's perspectives and policies emerged through his experience of the last decades of Mongol rule in China and through interactions with senior advisors, military commanders, and family members. I use the term "Chinggisid narrative" to describe the early Ming court's story of the Mongol empire. In part this reflects verbal parsimony; "Chinggisid narrative" is shorter than "how the Ming court told the story of the Mongol empire." Narrative also highlights the idea of a story deliberately crafted to achieve certain ends. In a narrow sense, Chinggisid refers to Chinggis Khan and his descendants, most especially elite

[2] For points of entry, Weatherford, *Genghis Khan*; Allsen, "Circulation of Military Technology"; *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*; *Culture and Conquest*; "Technologies of Governance in the Mongolian Empire"; Findlay, "First Globalization Episode."

[3] Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*; Biran, *Chinggis Khan*; Mano Eiji, "Jūgo jūroku seiki"; Melville, "Keshig"; Millward, "Qing Formation"; Miyawaki, "Legitimacy"; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*; Rossabi, "Mongol Influences"; May, *Mongol Conquests*, pp. 81–106.

members who in the aggregate constituted the most powerful ruling house in Eurasia. In a broad sense, Chinggisid denotes the Mongol imperial enterprise.

I use Chinggisid narrative in two ways. First, it refers to explanations of the Mongol empire's origins, glories, and fall. This first and fuller sense usually also involves an elucidation of the relationship between the Mongol empire and the person or polity producing the Chinggisid narrative. For instance, during the period of empire, Chinggisid elites, allied supporters, and subjugated peoples developed stories – which could vary strikingly – about the Mongol empire's rise. Such narratives made clear how the Chinggisids came to power and how the narrator came to hold his particular place in the polity. The *Secret History of the Mongols* recounts Chinggis Khan's miraculous rise from obscurity to heroic conqueror. Written in the mid-thirteenth century, a time of rapid change, by a Mongolian noble for fellow elites,[4] it addresses issues of a proper political order and, implicitly, Mongol aristocrats' place in that world. In the early fourteenth century, the Persian administrator Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318) directed a massive chronicle project that situated the Mongol empire in world history. Such works also made clear why service in the Mongol empire was a worthwhile, respectable calling.[5] Persian and Chinese chroniclers worked hard to incorporate the Mongols into more familiar patterns of rulership and belief.[6] In the post-empire period, the intended audience for such Chinggisid narratives was individuals, groups, or regimes that contested the Mongol empire's mantle, possessed firsthand personal experience of the empire, or both.

After the mid-thirteenth century, more and more Mongol rule devolved to individual Chinggisid Houses, headed at least in name by Chinggis Khan's male successors. Perspectives shifted accordingly. Descriptions of "the empire" were increasingly descriptions of the territories and peoples governed by individual houses. We will return to this point later. The second, more limited sense of Chinggisid narrative is selective use of discrete episodes from the Mongols' story to make a specific point. For instance, the early Ming court reviewed the Mongols' abortive 1274 and 1281 invasions of Japan to drive home arguments about relations between the Ming dynasty and contemporary Japanese authorities.

[4] Atwood, "Date of the 'Secret History of the Mongols'."

[5] Kolbas, "Mongol Propaganda," p. 167. Lane ("Persian Notables," p. 183) notes that within a decade of Hülegü's establishment of the Ilkhanate, scholars such as Qāḍī Baydawī were depicting it as a "legitimate, entrenched Iranian dynasty." Lane points out that Juwaynī described the Mongols "not so much as they wished to be seen but more how he and the Persian elite might wish them to be."

[6] Pfeiffer, "Canonization of Cultural Memory"; Melville, "History and Myth"; Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance"; *Mongols and the Islamic World*, pp. 326–27; Kumar, "Ignored"; "Courts, Capitals," pp. 136–40.

In both their full and limited versions, Chinggisid narratives were tied to important issues and justified political, military, and diplomatic actions. For instance, in the period circa 1260–1360, Korean, Turkic, and Chinese literati celebrated Chinggis' grandson, Qubilai (1215–94, r. 1260–94), for his far-sighted rulership and embrace of Chinese culture. Such praise both justified foreign rule and rationalized loyalty to the Yuan dynasty, as the Mongols were known in East Asia.[7] The early Timurid court's Chinggisid narrative highlighted the close ties between Tamerlane (1336–1405) and past Mongol glories to bolster his legitimacy and charisma, which in turn improved his ability to recruit followers.

This book explores Chinggisid narratives created after the collapse of most of the great Chinggisid houses that in the aggregate ruled much of Eurasia. By that time, as the examples above suggest, the practice of telling such stories was already a century or more old. In fact, the power of post-empire narratives depended on earlier precedents. Courts created narratives in the hope of influencing people's thoughts and actions. Far more effective than entirely new narratives were familiar stories that drew on easily understood language, ideas, and memories. More important than innovation was communication.[8] Courts and their agents transmitted Chinggisid narratives through official written proclamations and edicts to audiences at home and abroad, as well as through more informal poems, essays, and prefaces.[9] Less well documented, Chinggisid narratives also circulated in oral form, spread for instance through envoys dispatched to foreign courts or in face-to-face communications between rulers and their recently incorporated subjects.

My principal unit of analysis is the Ming court rather than Ming China, Ming society, Ming culture, or the Ming state. The focus is dictated in part by convenience. As the frequent site of policy debate and points of convergence of political, economic, and cultural power, courts generate rich source materials, including court chronicles, poems, imperial portraiture, and architectural monuments.[10] To better extract resources from their hinterlands and beyond, courts not only used coercion but also developed modes of persuasion and representation. These centers produced documentary and nondocumentary materials to persuade fellow nobles, subject populations, and surrounding peoples and polities that the court and its ruling elite deserved the resources

[7] Langlois, "Song Lian and Liu Ji," pp. 133–38.

[8] Blair ("Illustrating History," pp. 829–30) argues that incorporation of Chinese book illustration techniques into some versions of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compilation of Chronicles* was intended to better drive home enduring moral themes. Here, a new communication technology is harnessed to better convey a familiar message.

[9] Pictorial narratives could perform a similar role. See Hillenbrand, "Iskandar Cycle"; Blair, "Illustrating History."

[10] Duindam, "Court as Meeting Point."

they demanded. Even when these articulations seem forced or self-serving, they nonetheless often illumine the fears and aspirations, the perspectives and beliefs of the court at a level of detail seldom available for other segments of society. Courts' decisions often had wide-ranging consequences, putting people and materials into action.

My focus is also guided by an effort at truth in advertising. Given China's scale and complexity, discussions framed in such terms as Ming China, Ming society, Ming culture, or the Ming state quickly become increasingly grand generalizations resting on ever more modest empirical foundations. Generalizations are as essential to historical inquiry as they are to other disciplines. We just need to be clear about the bases of such generalizations and the analytical weight they are meant to bear. To talk about Ming views of the Mongol empire on the basis of the writings of a handful of highly educated men is misleading. Focus on the Ming court may be too narrow to answer questions about popular attitudes, regional culture, or gender identity. Nonetheless, the court, as the best documented and among the most influential actors in the Ming imperium, is a useful point of departure, an early step in the much longer journey toward a well-rounded understanding of perceptions, depictions, and appropriations of the Mongol legacy in China. Likewise, close studies of the Ming, Koryŏ, Chosŏn, Moghul, Timurid, Muscovite, and Mongolian courts are required before informed generalizations about Eurasian understanding of the Mongol legacy are possible.

Courts often serve as a metonym for the wider empire or kingdom, but they are a small subset of the larger polity. Courts do not necessarily represent the interests or perspectives of the people within a polity's borders or even its ruling elite. The Ming court's heart was the ruling Zhu family, just as the Koryŏ court was headed by the Wang family, the Timurid court by Tamerlane and his descendants, the Great Yuan court by Qubilai and his descendants. Around them at the center were family members related by blood, marriage, and adoption; beyond them were intimate servitors who attended the ruling house's personal needs. Depending on the historical particulars and how capacious our definition, court might also include royal secretaries, senior court ministers, royal secretaries, military commanders, religious specialists, court artisans, and performers.[11] Court members often had more in common with fellow members of foreign courts than they did with their ostensible compatriots. They shared highly developed protocols of status and distinction and a strong sense of social, cultural, and political privilege. Through ritual, diplomatic, and economic exchanges, courts interacted with other courts.

[11] Duindam, *Dynasties*, pp. 156–226.

"So What?"

The previous paragraphs have described this book's brief. At this point the reader is no doubt wondering, "So what?" Why should we care how a Chinese ruler in the fourteenth century and his court told the story of the Mongol empire? What does it tell us about the Mongol empire, the Ming dynasty, or Eurasia? What insights does it offer about empire, memory, and historical narrative as a tool of power? In other words, what are this book's stakes?

Mongol Empire

Let's start with the Mongol empire. The early Ming court produced invaluable accounts of the Mongol empire, especially its development in eastern Eurasia. The aforementioned *Secret History of the Mongols* is an essential source for understanding how Mongol elites understood the rise of Chinggis and his family. The original was written in Mongolian in the mid-thirteenth century, but nearly all editions used today can be traced back to one compiled at the Ming court in the 1380s as part of its efforts to train translators in the Mongolian language to better pursue dynastic interests. The Ming court also compiled *The Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*.[12] In the most common typeset edition today, it exceeds 4,600 pages in fifteen volumes of Chinese text. It is by far the longest and most detailed surviving source on the Mongol empire, especially its eastern Eurasian branches. The *Secret History* and *Official History* were composed and in large part drafted under Mongol rule, respectively. The final versions, however, were completed under the Ming court's auspices. Scholars industriously mine *Official History* for information about the Mongol empire, but they spare little time to consider how the Ming court shapes our perceptions of the Chinggisids. If we shift our focus forward in time, few Mongolian language sources survive from the late fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries. To reconstruct Mongolian history of that period, we rely most commonly on materials from the Ming court.

Put simply, much of what we know about the Mongols comes to us through the Ming court, which as I will show shortly, was far from a neutral observer. A cardinal principle of history is consideration of sources. How, when, and why were they created? Answering these questions is impossible without a close look at the early Ming court. Finally, from the late 1360s to the late 1390s, the Ming court profoundly influenced the fortunes of the Great Yuan, whose military and political policies often directly responded to Zhu Yuanzhang's actions and announcements. Thus, exploration of the early Ming

[12] See Chapter 5.

court's Chinggisid narrative sharpens understanding of the Mongol empire, especially the history of the Great Yuan.

Close consideration of the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative also sheds light on a simple but enduring question – "What was the Mongol empire?" A simplified version of the most common answer can be explained as follows. Chinggis Khan conquered and ruled much of Eurasia until he died in 1227. His descendants expanded and ruled an even greater empire. This unitary empire ruled by a single man dissolved circa 1251. That year Möngke, one of Chinggis's grandsons, came to power in a consensus-shattering struggle. The empire broke into four khanates, the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, the Chaghataid khanate, and the Yuan dynasty.[13] Thereafter, relations among the four khanates varied from loose allegiance to open hostility. In this interpretation, the four khanates were separate, independent regimes. No one person ruled all Chinggisid lands. Put in other words, as an empire, the Mongol polity ended when a single leader ceased to rule the entire Chinggisid realm.[14]

Others scholars, in contrast, highlight the underlying unity of the Chinggisid polity long after 1251. Yes, they concede, the heads of individual polities (*ulus*es) such as the Golden Horde, Ilkhanate, and so on enjoyed significant autonomy. However, an interlocking set of administrative structures, shared revenues, and an enduring corporate identity as fellow descendants of Chinggis Khan constituted an integrated empire. The most forceful version of this argument holds that the Great Khan of the Great Yuan remained the entire Mongol empire's ruler.[15]

Resolution of this question exceeds my abilities, but the early Ming case does bring into focus the question of perceptions. In one sense, "Mongol empire" is a product of our analytical categories and historical judgments. It is a handy social science term intended to facilitate comparative understanding of a particular genus of political organization. Alternatively, we might use Mongol empire to mean how people of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries understood the Chinggisid polity. Although some perceived the Chinggisid polity as a single integrated whole, the majority likely viewed it through a more local lens. Even before the dissolution of the "united empire," most people experienced Chinggisid rule in narrower, more limited ways. A small proportion of the population might travel to distant lands as military, artisanal,

[13] Jackson ("Dissolution of the Mongol Empire") offers learned and clear articulation. Elsewhere ("From Ulus"), he shows that the four khanates evolved over time rather than at a single moment.

[14] Munkh-Erdene ("Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From?," p. 228) argues, "the idea that the people of Mongolian plateau were to constitute a single realm under a sole rule was widely held by the aristocracies of the Mongolic people before the establishment of the Chinggisid state."

[15] Kim Hodong, "Mong'gol che'guk"; "Unity of the Mongol Empire"; "Was Da Yuan."

administrative, or religious labor, but the majority did not. Most people's contributions to far-flung campaigns of conquest or revenue portfolios of nobles located on the other side of Asia were delivered to local tax collectors and other state agents. During the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Chinggisid narratives often talked about Chinggis Khan and his immediate successors. However, those narrative were most detailed in their depictions of the local khanate or great house, whether it was the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, or the Yuan dynasty.

First-generation Chinggisid narratives of the "post-imperial" period have strikingly little to say about "the Mongol empire" as a whole. They regularly (but not always) refer to Chinggis and his conquests but lavish greater attention on the immediately preceding great house, for instance, the Ilkhanate, Chaghadaid, or Yuan. What does this relative silence mean? Perhaps successors feared that discussion of the Mongol empire might invite invidious comparisons. Who, after all, could match the territorial expanse of Chinggis and his immediate successors? At least equally likely, "the Mongol empire" did not resonate powerfully with contemporary audiences who were more invested in the story of their local Chinggisid house. One might conclude that such narratives reflect the circumscribed perspectives of subjugated local populations, for instance scholars deeply wedded to classical traditions and cultural identities that predated the Mongols' arrival.[16] However, at least in the case of the early Ming court, communications to the Great Khan, his commanders, and Yuan nobles invoked the Great Yuan ruling house more than the entire Mongol empire. If Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors read their audiences right – certainly a big if – this suggests that in the last third of the fourteenth century, Chinggisids and their close allies in eastern Eurasia were thinking less of the Mongol empire and more of their particular patch of the Chinggisid polity. This may reflect the locus of memory of the past and prospects for the future.

Early Ming Court

The way we approach the past is almost always mediated by previous generations of scholars. Their questions, perspectives, and interpretations shape our understanding of history in ways both obvious and subtle. Perceptions of the early Ming court are no different. They are embedded in a series of assumptions about the course of Chinese history over the last six hundred years and more. Let's begin with something specific. The founding Ming emperor ordered the compilation of the history of the Yuan dynasty almost as soon as he came to power. Writing an official account of the preceding dynasty was a long-

[16] Jackson (*Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 327) explains the "identification of the Ilkhans with Iran" as "a reaction to the sundering of the unitary Mongol empire."

established political and scholarly convention that predated Zhu Yuanzhang's seizure of power by a millennium or more. *Official History* is regularly criticized for its slipshod editing, which is explained in part by its speed of compilation (little more than a year). Inaccurate and incomplete information is also often attributed to the early Ming court's poor understanding of the Mongols, their culture, their language, and their empire. This ignorance is commonly assumed to reflect a lack of interest of the Mongols in particular and the wider world in general. This interpretation in turn grows from what we "know" about the early Ming dynasty. It was dedicated to the revival of Chinese tradition, which involved the repudiation of "barbarian" influences introduced under Mongol rule. Such an understanding fits seamlessly with an even broader and more common story of an isolated or closed China, which was not "opened" to the world until the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century, or late twentieth century (that is, by the West's arrival in the late nineteenth century, the fall of the late imperial dynasty in the early twentieth century, or Deng Xiaoping's reforms of the 1970s and 1980s), depending on one's perspective.

Specialists are well aware that such assumptions and generalizations are flawed. In recent decades much work has been dedicated to overturning the closed China narrative, which grew from eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century views of "the West" as the natural agent of change and civilizational advancement around the world.[17] Scholars have uncovered vast and often illicit networks of trade, migration, and cultural exchange that linked China to neighbors near and far.[18] Thriving trade in musk, furs, porcelains, tea, and more came to encompass ever more of the globe.[19] Trade and diaspora studies have done much to dispel the image of a closed China during the Ming and Qing periods, that is, from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries.[20] Understanding of what was once considered an unassailable bastion of closed China – the imperial court – is also undergoing reevaluation. The most developed studies have focused on the Qing period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.[21] Such studies have brought to light deep and sustained ties among the Qing throne and Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchurian, and Muslim leaders.[22] They also show broad engagement with Chinese society. The Qing throne not only cultivated close ties to landed elites that staffed the Qing's bureaucracy; it also developed connections to popular religious life, moral codes, material culture, artisanship, cuisine, and

[17] Waley-Cohen, *Sextants*. [18] Hansen, *Open Empire*.
[19] Borschberg, "European Musk"; Schlesinger, *Trimmed*.
[20] For literature review, see Mosca, "Qing Empire."
[21] For points of departure, see Mosca, "Qing Empire."
[22] Atwood, "Worshipping Grace"; Benard, "Qianlong Emperor"; Berger, *Empire*; Grupper, "Manchu Patronage"; Li, "State-Building," pp. 18–19, 30–31, 67; Newby, *The Empire and the Khanate*; Schwieger, *Dalai Lama*.

more. Research on foreign relations suggests that the Qing court had mixed levels of interest and understanding that varied by country, individual emperor, and circumstances.[23] The overall picture overturns notions of an isolated China or insulated imperial court under Qing rule.

Assessment of the Yuan and Ming courts has also changed strikingly. Common wisdom once held that Mongol rulers, whether in Baghdad, Sarai, Samarqand, or Daidu, did not care much about local culture. The inimitable translator and poet Arthur Waley (1889–1966) famously quipped that Mongols were like the policemen who guarded the British Museum but never took the time to appreciate its treasures. As long as they paid taxes, provided labor, and obeyed the law, local subjects were beneath the consideration of Mongol rulers. In other words, Mongol courts were largely isolated from the lands and peoples they conquered. In recent decades, researchers have sharply challenged such an understanding.[24] Mongol elites not only liked shiny gold and silver but also appreciated sophisticated textiles, new tastes in food, and elements of Chinese and Arabic medicine. Chinggisid courts, including the Great Yuan, commissioned works ranging from palaces and monasteries to hanging scrolls and book illustrations in local idioms.[25] The Great Yuan and Ilkhanate courts sponsored the translation of Chinese and Tibetan works into Mongolian, and Chinese statecraft works into Persian, respectively.[26] The Great Yuan also underwrote the publication of Chinese-language works on Confucian ethics and Buddhist practices.[27] Mongol courts appropriated administrative and financial practices developed by subjugated populations for their own ends.[28] One major objective was demonstration of political legitimacy in languages and media immediately comprehensible and compelling to local audiences. Personal interest in spiritual, artistic, artisanal, economic, administrative, military, technological, medical, and culinary resources beyond Mongolia also figured prominently.[29] Such an engagement did not mean abandonment of past steppe tradition; it instead represented a selective adoption of new practices.

[23] Mosca, "Empire and the Circulation of Frontier Intelligence"; *From Frontier Policy to Foreign Policy*; "Qing State and Its Awareness."

[24] The revisionist view has not swept the entire field. See Melville, "End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 329.

[25] Jing, "Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi"; Weidner, "Aspects of Painting and Patronage"; Weitz, "Art and Politics." Melville ("End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 329) points out that cultural patronage might reflect the advice (and tastes) of indigenous advisors rather than Mongol rulers' preferences. Jackson (*Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 324) raises a similar question in regard to Quranic verse on Hülegü's coins.

[26] On Mongolian translation of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, see de Rachewiltz, "Preclassical Mongolian"; "More"; Cleaves, "An Early Mongolian Version". Allsen ("Mongols as Vectors," p. 137–40) discusses the transmission of texts across the Mongol empire.

[27] Miya, *Mongoru jidai*, pp. 30–37. Miya argues that the Yuan state extensively patronized Confucianism.

[28] Allsen, *Mongolian Imperialism*.

[29] Atwood, "Buddhists as Natives."

Among the first to question the Ming court's imperial isolation and explore instead its engagement with the wider world were art historians concerned with expansive imperial patronage networks only imperfectly captured in frequently used textual sources.[30] They and other historians turned to architecture, painting, religious texts, and other material objects to construct a more accurate account of the court's ties to the capital, the provinces, and the borderlands.[31] Such work has brought to light efforts to strengthen an individual emperors' legitimacy and dynastic authority through appeals to Daoist and Buddhist (including its Tibetan varieties) traditions.[32] Scholars have also significantly broadened their definition of the Ming court. Rather than focus solely on the central courts in Nanjing and later Beijing, much research now includes the hundreds of princely courts spread throughout the realm as part of the greater Ming court.[33]

Zhu Yuanzhang and his son Zhu Di, who seized the throne in 1402 after a civil war, strove to demonstrate their political legitimacy in a variety of modes. They codified and promulgated authoritative versions of Confucianism. They also appealed to popular religious traditions, highlighting their status as men of personal charisma and efficacy. They both drew attention, albeit in different ways, to their standing as dynamic military leaders.[34] Zhu Yuanzhang, Zhu Di, and their successors did not take for granted that domestic or international audiences would recognize their legitimacy or obey their commands.

Such efforts to "sell rulership" – a concept borrowed from Sharpe's study of the Tudor monarchy – depended on knowledge of perceptions and practices beyond the court.[35] Like their Mongol predecessors and their Manchu successors, early Ming emperors were not interested in dialogue with their subjects on equal status. Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhu Di sought to persuade a variety of audiences – from highly educated, affluent men to illiterate farmers at home, to neighboring kings and tribal chieftains abroad – of both their personal qualifications and their dynasty's legitimacy. Zhu Yuanzhang issued detailed instructions to his subjects that were to be reprinted and distributed widely.[36] He periodically published justifications of major court purges against

[30] See Haufler's pioneering "Buddhist Pictorial Art" and "Imperial Engagements." Robinson ("Introduction" and "Ming Court") reviews the Ming court.

[31] Ching, "Icons of Rulership"; "Tibetan Buddhism"; "Visual Images"; Clunas, "Precious Stones"; Debreczeny, "Early Ming Imperial Atelier"; "Sino-Tibetan Artistic Synthesis"; Haufler, "Faces of Transnational Buddhism"; Jang, "Eunuch Agency"; Murray, "Didactic Picturebooks."

[32] Ching, "Icons of Rulership"; "Tibetan Buddhism"; "Visual Images"; Haufler, "Imperial Engagements"; Chan, "Zhenwushen"; Debreczeny, "Early Ming Imperial Atelier"; "Sino-Tibetan Artistic Synthesis"; Haufler, "Faces of Transnational Buddhism."

[33] Clunas, *Screen of Kings*; Robinson, "Princes in the Polity"; Wang, *Ming Prince*; "Ming Princely Patronage"; Zhang, *Royal Taste*; Clunas et al., *Ming China*; *Courts*. For literature review, see Robinson, "Princely Courts."

[34] Robinson, *Martial Spectacles*.

[35] Sharpe, *Selling*.

[36] Lian Qiyuan, "Chuanbo yu kongjian."

ostensible enemies of the dynasty, even if the extent of their circulation is often unclear. The Chinggisid narrative explored in this book is one example of Zhu Yuanzhang's broader pattern of thought and behavior.

Most accounts of the early Ming court's foreign relations highlight an abrupt turn inward after several centuries of wide-ranging diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties to eastern Eurasian and beyond. Scholars who see Ming (and more broadly Chinese) foreign relations as fundamentally pacifistic often draw attention to Zhu Yuanzhang's denunciation of the Mongols' expansionist military campaigns. He solemnly announced a policy of nonaggression vis-à-vis fifteen neighboring polities.[37] Another noteworthy feature of early Ming foreign policy is the Maritime Prohibitions. Previously the Song dynasty (960–1279) taxed commerce, including international trade. Mongol elites' keen interest in the prodigious wealth generated by international trade led to expanded overland and maritime trade routes. In sharp contrast, Zhu Yuanzhang outlawed private overseas trade, circumscribed contact with foreign lands to tightly controlled state-to-state relations, and prohibited his subjects from traveling abroad. Zhu Yuanzhang's Maritime Prohibitions are sometimes linked to the early Ming court's overarching project to create a carefully calibrated hierarchical order, which was finely attuned to differences of status and corresponding obligations.[38] At home, the emperor sat atop the apex. Abroad, China stood at the center. The relative cultural and ritual status of surrounding countries was determined by how faithfully they observed the Ming state's guidelines. This is the so-called Sino-Barbarian Discourse (*Huayilun*), a rhetoric that highlights China's uniquely central role in the world. Sino-Barbarian Discourse and its first cousin, "the tribute system," remain highly influential analytical frameworks. Rhetoric used in correspondence with foreign rulers is assumed to be a reflection and extension of domestic politics and ideology. Most specialists in the Ming period recognize shortcomings in the approaches sketched earlier. However, the overall impression, especially in broader narratives of Chinese or global history, is of a xenophobic, conservative, nostalgic regime that was unconcerned and uninformed about the outside world.

The emphasis here is different. Exclusive focus on an inward turn is misleading. The early Ming court was deeply engaged in the wider Eurasian world. One

[37] Scholars like Fuma Susumu ("Chūgoku kinsei," pp. 104–5) distinguish Zhu Yuanzhang's willingness to use military force against the Mongols to the north and the renunciation of military action elsewhere. Wan Ming (*Mingdai zhongwai*) consistently highlights the Ming court's essentially peaceful foreign relations policy; military clashes with the Mongols are depicted as an aberration. For extended review and critique of pacifistic interpretations of Ming foreign relations, see Johnston, *Cultural Realism*. Based on examination of early Ming policies vis-à-vis its southern neighbors, Wade ("Domination in Four Keys") similarly rejects the idea of an essentially defensive or pacifistic orientation.

[38] Danjō Hiroshi's influential study is entitled *The Ming Period's Maritime Prohibitions/Tribute System and Sino-Barbarian Order*.

study identifies 170 surviving edicts from Zhu Yuanzhang to fifteen foreign kingdoms. This represents only a portion of the total number issued during his reign.[39] Few doubt that the early Ming court's domestic politics and ideology were closely intertwined with its foreign relations. Less remarked is how Zhu Yuanzhang tailored his message to specific audiences. The early Ming court developed a rhetorical repertoire, including its Chinggisid narrative, to achieve its goals. They included territorial security, diplomatic recognition, and political and military cooperation. To make his case as effectively as possible, Zhu Yuanzhang highlighted themes that would resonate strongly with particular audiences. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach in its foreign relations, the early Ming was attuned to difference and variation.

An essential prerequisite for crafting individualized messages for both domestic audiences and neighboring countries is accurate, timely information. Zhu Yuanzhang assiduously gathered news on an enormous range of subjects from a wide variety of actors. Collecting information about the Great Yuan was one facet of a more general challenge: securing reliable, unfiltered, useful data. Zhu Yuanzhang worked hard to keep abreast of conditions within his realm. The most chilling examples are the activities of state security units such as the Brocade Guard and the Eastern Depots, known primarily for their spy networks and use of torture.[40] In truth they were just part of Zhu Yuanzhang's far broader attempt to secure information. A small incident from 1377 gives some sense of the Ming founder's view of things. Zhu Yuanzhang summoned to the palace for a face-to-face meeting some four dozen provincial officials in the capital for compulsory performance reviews. They had failed to "uncover and assuage all the people's ills," complained the emperor. "You leave me in ignorance. Don't you know what your responsibility is? . . . When you get back to your posts, you need to carefully inform me of the main things."[41] As an alternative to intelligence from imperial officials, he turned to reports from local elders, men without government posts from thousands of communities throughout the realm, who brought him news in written reports and oral communications.[42]

Upon forming an alliance with the Ming dynasty, leaders from oasis cities in Central Asia, the Tibetan borderlands, the Mongolian steppe, and the Jurchen homelands often traveled to the capital in Nanjing. The same was true for leaders from the southwestern regions of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Huguang. The imperial relay system provides a sense of the institutional commitment to the transportation of such men. Zhu Yuanzhang established some 1350 stations

[39] Wan Ming, *Mingdai zhongwai*, pp. 132–39, Table One.
[40] See (Ye) Ding Yi, *Mingdai tewu*.
[41] Liu Song, *Chaweng wenji* (*Siku quanshu zhenben*, 7.5b–8b), cited in Dardess, "From Civil War to Ming Founding," p. 21.
[42] Maesako, "Min Taiso no jōhō shūshū."

along 7,000 miles that stretched from the borders to the capital. Traveling on the emperor's dime, envoys were provided with horses, donkeys, carts, and barges. They were lodged in the relay stations, which supplied food, drink, and other creature comforts.[43] At his court, Zhu Yuanzhang quizzed them about local political, military, economic, and cultural conditions. Zhu Yuanzhang similarly gathered intelligence from Jurchen, Korean, and Vietnamese eunuchs and palace women in his service. He further gleaned news from religious figures, including Japanese monks, Tibetan prelates, and Muslim teachers. Military officers who led campaigns to the borderlands were frequently recalled to the capital to meet with the emperor. These men and women provided the information that Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors used when crafting messages for particular audiences. Rhetorical appeals did not stand in isolation. Zhu Yuanzhang used diplomatic overtures in conjuncture with military and economic levers to influence his audiences' perceptions and behavior. Timely, accurate information was essential for all such efforts. Likewise, creating a compelling narrative about the rise and fall of the Chinggisids for different people in different places required knowledge about their experiences with the Mongol empire, including both historical memory and contemporary relations.

The early Ming court approached its foreign relations differently than did the preceding Yuan and succeeding Qing dynasties (1634–1911). In fact, both in intention and consequence, early Ming policies differed even from those adopted later in the dynasty. Scholars often sell the importance of their work by stressing the lasting consequences of whatever they are researching. The most common justification for work on the early Ming period is to argue that Zhu Yuanzhang's policies set the tone, determined the trajectory, or established the institutional framework for the entire Ming dynasty. In contrast, I stress here the early Ming period's peculiarities. Zhu Yuanzhang and his court responded to a unique set of circumstances. Yes, every founding emperor needs to justify his seizure of power, offer some explanation of his relation to his predecessor, and come to terms with the fallen ruling house, whether through cooption, accommodation, exile, or extermination.

For the early Ming court, however, such efforts occurred in the shadow of an unprecedentedly expansive and powerful Eurasian empire. In 1368, the Great Yuan lost control of nearly all its Chinese territory. For the rest of the fourteenth century and beyond, however, the Ming court perceived – with good reason – the Great Yuan as its greatest military and political threat. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors labored for decades to establish effective and administrative military control over the Ming dynasty's expanding territory.

[43] Harris, "'Arteries and Veins' of the Imperial Body," pp. 292–93, 297, 300.

They also worked hard to justify their violent seizure of power to audiences at home and abroad. Palpable worry about the Great Yuan permeates nearly all such military, political, and diplomatic efforts. Close attention to the Great Ming court's efforts against its greatest rival, not just on the battlefield or along the northern border, but also across a variety of fields, throws into clear relief that the early Ming dynasty never took its legitimacy, status, or longevity for granted. It is easy to forget the sense of urgency and unease that drove the Ming dynasty's first generation. Even observers from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not fully appreciate how much had changed since 1368. By the mid- to late fourteenth century, the Chinggisid empire was much diminished from its acme. Yet its range and influence remained clear to all contemporary observers. In this sense, the first Ming emperor shared as much in common with fellow first-generation Eurasian dynastic founders such as Tamerlane as he did with the founders of the Han, Tang, Song, or Qing dynasties.

Thus, analysis of the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative lays bare the perspectives, fears, and hopes of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors. It also reveals how the early Ming court understood the Mongol empire's significance for neighbors, from Japan and Korea to the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty. In other words, analysis of the early Ming Chinggisid narrative improves our understanding of the Ming court's self-perceptions, its abilities to gather and analyze intelligence about neighboring countries, and its commitment to influence thought and action in other eastern Eurasia polities. It also clarifies the early Ming court's place within Chinese history's wider span.

Eurasia

During the thirteenth century, the Mongols brought much of Eurasia under their control. Polities that escaped Mongol rule, most famously the Mamluks in West Asia, the Dehlhi Sultanate in South Asia, and Japan in East Asia, were nonetheless drawn into its orbit through military conflict, economic exchange, cultural interaction, and the movement of personnel.[44] From the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, the majority of the world's population was directly and indirectly bound up with the Mongol empire. Even after the empire's decline and collapse, it remained a shared reference point for much of the globe. This was especially true in the century from the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century. Courts from Cairo to Kaegyŏng (Korea), from Moscow to Delhi, knew of the Chinggisids and their special status. Historical memory of the Mongol empire was fresh. In fact, the Chingissids were often a living

[44] Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*; Amitai-Press, *Mongols and Mamluks*; *Mongols in the Islamic Lands*; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*.

memory. As a result of the Mongol empire, conquerors and conquered had been spread across much of Eurasia. Only a small portion of that diaspora population ever returned to its ancestral homelands. Chinggisids and other allied nobles with family history of service to the Mongol empire, instead, were integrated into the military services, even ruling elites, of the Mamluk, Muscovite, Timurid, and Moghul polities in western and central Asia polities to the Ming and Koryŏ dynasties in the east. They brought experiences and memories of the Mongol empire, some of which were then transmitted to the constellation of courts that grew out of Chinggisid collapse. These same men (we know far less about women) frequently acted as vectors for political and diplomatic contact, serving as envoys between courts and specialist consultants on political and military affairs among Mongolian diaspora communities.

These courts understood the Mongol legacy and its relevance to themselves in different ways. Each created its own story of the Mongol empire to advance its interests. Some like the Moghul khanate (in today's western Xinjiang, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan) or the Great Yuan regime on the Mongolian steppe claimed direct descent from Chinggis, rightful heirs to his empire. Others sought a more qualified link. The early Timurid dynasty forged marriage ties to Chinggis' descendants and announced its commitment to the restoration of the Mongol empire's glories. At the same time, it burnished its credentials as pious Muslims committed to Persian high culture. The early Ming court insisted it was the rightful successor to the Great Yuan and praised Qubilai as a sage ruler. In some contexts, however, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors castigated the Mongols as uncouth barbarians whose disastrous rule, especially under the last Mongol ruler to reign from Daidu, had corrupted Chinese civilization and brought decades of suffering and chaos to millions of people.

Whether they depicted themselves as the Chinggisids' heirs or implacable foes, whether ties to the Chinggisids constituted the greater or lesser part of their rulership, Eurasian elites prominently invoked the Mongol legacy. As a shared reference, memory of the Mongol empire facilitated communication – without guaranteeing agreement – among courts. This book focuses on the second half of the fourteenth century, when courts across Eurasia were first developing strategies for harnessing the Chinggisid legacy's potential for a post-empire world. Because of its temporal proximity and the contemporary power of the Great Yuan and other Chinggisid regimes, the Mongol legacy held a special immediacy for this first generation of post-empire courts. Their founders and their court members had direct, personal experience of Mongol rule. They seized its territories, appropriated its institutions, and used its personnel. They defined themselves in terms of the Chinggisids. What Manz writes about fourteenth century Iran is applicable to most Eurasian elites at the time; "What we see … is a large and varied group of actors, almost all of

whom had been intimately involved in Mongol rule. The Mongol past was to some extent their past, a past that still mattered."[45] To tell the story of the Mongol empire was to write themselves into its history.[46] It was to define identity and status. Was the Great Yuan a legitimate polity in a line of orthodox dynasties? The answer determined whether the Ming court would cast itself as the Great Yuan's successor or distance itself from a noxious foreign invader.

To extend this discussion one final step, the ways Eurasian courts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries perceived and used memories of the Mongol empire has relevance for recent efforts to understand "the question of historical boundaries, geographical categories, and their fixity or porosity."[47] In considering the level and variety of connections among regions, communities, and individuals across the globe in the last half millennium and more, scholars advocate many approaches and conceptualization. They have seen a single encompassing system, a series of systems, ever-expanding integration, punctuated connections, wide-ranging material exchanges, moments of intellectual, cultural, and technological convergence, and points of growing divergence. Such questions grow in part from long-standing interests about modernity (and early modernity), variously defined, and whether it is more useful to talk about a single universal modernity (and early modernity) or multiple iterations that developed in different ways at different times and places. Craig Clunas observes that the field of Chinese studies "has perhaps become over-excited about connectivity," that is, the connections that tie China into narratives of Asia and more generally the world.[48] Readers will make their own judgment about my excitement level, but the early Ming court offers a well-documented example of a major regional actor and its efforts to use a widely if diversely shared historical memory of a singular moment in world history to advance its interests.

A Final Word: Uncertainty

Two final points before we turn to this book's organization. First, in their effort to provide clarity and identify underlying principals of complex historical events, historians run the risk of offering an overly tidy picture of the past. In this book, I organize and analyze the early Ming court's various proclamations related to the Chinggisids. However, my intention is not to suggest that Zhu Yuanzhang's statements were always consistent. Nor do I argue that his ideas emerged at a single moment in time and were communicated seamlessly

[45] Manz, "Mongol History," p. 134.
[46] Manz, "Mongol History," p. 132; DeWeese, "'Stuck in the Throat of Chingīz Khan'."
[47] Subrahmanyam, "One Asia, or Many?" p. 7.
[48] Clunas, "Connected Material Histories," p. 63.

to his senior ministers, who accepted them without reservation. The following three examples, all closely related to this book's central concerns, give a sense of Zhu Yuanzhang's contradictory or ambiguous positions. First, Zhu Yuanzhang claimed that Mongols ruined Chinese culture. He also said the Yuan dynasty was a great polity to which he was the rightful successor.[49] So which was it? Second, he claimed that he had inherited the Yuan dynasty's realm but never defined its territory. Did he plan to seize all lands and peoples ruled by the Yuan, which extended far beyond those controlled by past Chinese dynasties? Did he intend to take only "China proper"? Did he envision something else entirely? Third, Zhu Yuanzhang insisted that the Mongols' allotted span of rule had expired. At the same time, he urged the Great Khan to rule the steppe and to maintain cordial relations with the Ming dynasty.

Given that Zhu Yuanzhang made many claims to a variety of audiences over the span of four decades, inconsistencies and ambiguity should not alarm us too much. Tempted to identify his true thinking, we may attempt to winnow out utilitarian propaganda from what he "really thought." Alternatively, we may try to line up his statements along a timeline. Logic suggests that his views in 1368 differed from those of 1398. After all, he went from warlord to Heaven's Son. His regional rebel regime grew into the most powerful dynasty in east Eurasia.

Explication of contradictions and tensions is the historian's standard brief. Yet, contemporaries do not seem to have felt either constrained or conflicted with the multiplicity of Zhu Yuanzhang's claims. This apparent lack of angst or confusion may result from the vagaries of time, that is, incisive critiques or probing efforts to harmonize Zhu Yuanzhang's disparate views may have been lost, destroyed, or suppressed through intimidation. Yet, at least equally probable is that Zhu Yuanzhang and other contemporaries were content to draw from a broad rhetorical repertoire without too much worry about potential points of inconsistency or ambiguity. As the chapters ahead will show, each of the three points of tensions sketched earlier had at least a partial resolution. Zhu Yuanzhang made bold claims – he was successor to the Yuan and the Great Yuan had definitely ended in 1368 – but approached particular problems with flexibility in light of specific military and political circumstances. Although Zhu Yuanzhang might settle for less on a particular point, he never abandoned his vaulting rhetoric. Thus, he knew there were multiple realms in Eurasia, each with a sovereign who enjoyed at least a modicum of legitimacy in local eyes, but his public rhetoric seldom reduced the Ming dynasty to just one among several legitimate realms in the post-Mongol Eurasian order.

[49] Dardess, "Ming Tai-Tsu on the Yüan."

Second, it is easy to forget how deeply uncertainty, anxiety, and fear shaped the Ming dynasty's early decades. Zhu Yuanzhang's notorious use of torture and bloody purges created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for thousands of officials, scholars, their families and friends. But more fundamentally, no one knew the dynasty's future. In 1368, at least four regimes claimed Heaven's Mandate. Much of what we now consider "the Chinese core," such as Liaodong, Yunnan, Sichuan, Shaanxi – not to mention the Mongolian steppe, the Tibetan plateau, and Xinjiang – were beyond the Ming throne's control. Decades later, the Ming state had expanded its territory and consolidated its power. Yet, when Zhu Yuanzhang died in 1398, much remained uncertain. Relations with surrounding states were fractious. Liaodong was a military zone with substantial Mongol, Jurchen, and Korean populations that were subject only to "loose rein" government. Yunnan was a morass that required a massive military presence to suppress local discontent. Western Shaanxi and beyond remained subject to Great Yuan influence. In the realm of domestic politics, many worried what would happen when the dynastic founder died. Their fears were justified. Soon after Zhu Yuanzhang's death, a wrenching civil war erupted as one of his sons seized the throne from Zhu Yuanzhang's chosen successor.

Finally, there was the Great Yuan. With hindsight's benefit, it might appear that by 1398, the Ming dynasty had decisively eliminated the Great Yuan threat. The Ming state maintained a large standing army, supported extensive northern fortifications, and secured the allegiance of scores of Mongol nobles and tens of thousands of their followers. In the fifteenth century, Great Khans' political standing declined, and fighting among aristocratic lineages rived the steppe. However, late fourteenth century observers saw no end to the Mongol threat. During his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang had witnessed Yuan revival and diplomatic resurgence. Until his dying day, he knew that descendants of Chinggis Khan and Qubilai retained a special charisma on the steppe and in Central Asia. He likely wondered whether they still commanded respect and allegiance in neighboring countries that had ostensibly become Ming allies. Throughout his career, he again and again announced the end of the Mongols, a revival of Chinese culture, and an age of peace and prosperity. These, however, were promises issued in the face of an uncertain future. The Mongols had not vanished. Eradication of Mongol influences remained a distant prospect. Peace and prosperity might feel closer under a strong ruler, but war along the northern border was always possible. Repeated charges of treason and conspiracy at the highest levels of government suggested that further tumult lay ahead. Revival, unity, and purity held appeal precisely because they were promises about the future rather than descriptions of the present. Because the Ming dynasty remained in power until 1644, it is easy to forget that sacrosanct Chinese tradition, decisive Ming victory, and irreversible

Mongol defeat were rhetorical postures made in an environment of fear and uncertainty.

Even easier to forget is that Zhu Yuanzhang sought, seized, and consolidated power at a time when the Mongol empire remained Eurasia's single most important standard of rulership. The early Ming court's nearly obsessive concern with the Great Yuan – which surfaces in even edicts utterly unrelated to the Mongols – must again be understood against a backdrop of uncertainty. How was a former rebel and millenarian sect member, a Chinese peasant of low birth, to win legitimacy and allegiance at home and abroad when the rest of Eurasia was still on the Chinggisid standard? Other major leaders in eastern continental Eurasia were either of Chinggisid descent or claimed to rule in a Chinggisid noble's name. Zhu Yuanzhang could claim neither status. Only when we bear in mind the Chinggisid legacy's importance across east Eurasia can we appreciate how extraordinary Zhu Yuanzhang's rise really was. The Ming court emerged in a Chinggisid world. This basic fact does much to explain why Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors worked so hard to convince so many audiences why the Yuan dynasty should be consigned to the past and the Ming dynasty was its rightful and exclusive successor. The Ming dynasty's emergence is not just another episode in Chinese history. It is an important chapter in the Eurasian past.

Organization of the Book

This book is organized into four parts. Part I lays out the wider historical context in which we should understand the early Ming court's effort to come to terms with the legacy of the Mongol empire. Chapter 1, "Eurasia after the Fall," provides a synthetic analysis of the Mongol legacy in eastern Eurasia during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. It focuses on two related issues: (a) the Mongolian diaspora of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and (b) fourteenth century evocations of the Mongols in the rhetoric of rulership. Chapters 2–4 explore the Great Yuan after 1368, the year that Mongols abandoned nearly all their Chinese territory and retreated northward to the steppe. Given that the book focuses on the early Ming court, the reader may reasonably ask, why devote three chapters to the Great Yuan? The argument is simple. To understand the early Ming court, it is essential to understand its greatest rival, the Great Yuan. To understand why the Great Yuan was the early Ming court's greatest rival, it is essential to appreciate that for observers in the late fourteenth century, the Great Yuan's prestige and standing were rooted in its accomplishments of the century preceding 1368. Contemporary perception of the Great Yuan and expectations of the Great Ming grew from past experiences of Great Yuan governance. Developments after 1368 must be contextualized in a wider historical frame, a perspective

self-evident to contemporaries. To do otherwise is to fall victim to the early Ming court's narrative hegemony.

Chapters 2 and 3, "Daidu's Fall" and "Changing Fortunes," trace the fate of Mongol political and military power in eastern Eurasia during the decades following the Yuan ruling house's flight to the steppe in 1368. These two chapters examine the Yuan court's efforts to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of former subjects and allies, which included Chinese, Mongol, Turkic, Jurchen, Korean, and Central Asian populations, by drawing on political emblems developed during the empire's glory years. These chapters also explain the Yuan's military and administrative strategies to come to terms with its new position in eastern Eurasia. After 1368, the Great Yuan court remained a powerful actor on the international stage; the Ming court was never the sole political patron available to ambitious individuals and communities.

Chapter 4, "Black City" shifts from eastern and central to western Mongolia. It focuses on the only Great Yuan city for which administrative documents survive from the post-1368 period. Qara-Qoto or Black City is located in the southwestern corner of today's Inner Mongolia. Saved from extinction by arid conditions and long centuries of neglect, the Qara-Qoto documents reveal that Great Yuan regional governance continued after 1368. Documents occasionally mention military mobilization against impending Ming attack, but most focus on daily governance. This may not seem exciting, but it reminds us that 1368 as a transformative moment was in part a narrative creation of the Ming court meant to change contemporary perceptions of both the Great Yuan and the Great Ming courts. The documents also reveal Chinggisid nobles' ongoing importance to Great Yuan governance in Qara-Qoto and surrounding regions after 1368.

Now having clear sense of the Great Yuan court and its tumultuous history in the second half of the fourteenth century, we move to Part II, "The Chinggisid Narrative at Home." It traces the early Ming court's efforts to tell a story of the Mongol empire, and more particularly the Great Yuan, that would achieve two ends. First, the Ming court wanted to legitimate its own position in eastern Eurasia. How could a former rebel now be the rightful leader of China? How was he qualified to be the Son of Heaven? These questions needed answers. Second, and relatedly, the early Ming court wanted to discourage Chinggisid revival. If people believed that the Great Yuan might regain power, they would hesitate to transfer their allegiance to the Ming dynasty.

Chapter 5, "Telling Stories and Selling Rulership," examines how Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers created a story of the rise, glory, and irreversible fall of the Chinggisids for audiences at home. Primary audiences included not just educated Chinese men but also Mongols, Turks, Kitans, and Jurchens. Many felt a sense of loyalty to the Great Yuan. The early Ming court's

Chinggisid narrative highlighted such themes as the end of the Chinggisids' allotted span of rule, Chinese renewal, the physical and political marginality of the post-1368 Yuan court, and the deficiencies of contemporary Chinggisid leadership. Emphasizing the superiority of Ming rulership, such a discursive strategy was intended to persuade contemporary audiences to forsake the Great Yuan and pledge loyalty to the Great Ming. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors worked hard to create a version of the past that served the needs of the present.

Chapter 6, "A Precarious Tale: War, Military Men, and Court Politics" explores the role of war, military men, and court drama in the early Ming's rivalry with the Great Yuan. It also addresses the precarious nature of the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. All contemporaries understood that military force was essential for political legitimacy. Field commanders defeated Great Yuan armies, conquered its lands, captured Chinggisid nobles, and seized key political emblems such as seals of state. Thus, military commanders also figured in the story that the early Ming court told of the Great Yuan. The Ming court widely disseminated news of high political theater, for instance the reception of Chinggisid nobles in Nanjing. However, both court drama and military commanders repeatedly disrupted the Ming court's carefully scripted stories about inescapable Yuan defeat and inevitable Ming triumph. Commanders lost battles. Some were declared traitors. Political theater failed to go according to plan; on occasion it was dramatically undone by senior figures in the Ming court.

Part III, "A Tough Crowd," examines the early Ming court's efforts to convince the Great Yuan court and its principal supporters to accept the Great Yuan's irreversible fall and the Great Ming's irresistible rise. These men were skeptical of Ming claims to legitimacy and felt threatened by its expanding claims to territory and people. The Ming court tenaciously pursued its case, simultaneously exerting military pressure, extending economic incentives, and offering intellectual justifications. Part III focuses on the Ming court's rhetoric, but Zhu Yuanzhang's words were inseparable from his military and economic policies.

Chapter 7, "Letters to the Great Khan," examines letters that Zhu Yuanzhang wrote to three successive Great Khans between 1368 and 1388. These missives examine Chinggis' origins as a humble man of the people chosen by Heaven to unite the steppe and then subjugate much of Eurasia. They praise the glories of Qubilai, who united long-divided Chinese territory and ushered in a sparkling age of prosperity. They also chronicle the collapse of effective Yuan governance, which led to the rise of regional warlords, the spread of human suffering, and the disintegration of moral order. Perhaps most striking is the way Zhu Yuanzhang speaks as one ruler to another in these letters. He spends much time walking the Great Khans through the new reality of the day and their choices for the future. Zhu Yuanzhang's letters did not alter the Great

Khans' views, but they are consistent with what we know about the Ming founder's insistence that people not merely obey his orders but also accept his views.

Chapter 8, "South of the Clouds," moves from the Mongolian steppe to Yunnan, the southwestern kingdom of the Prince of Liang, a Chinggisid noble and Great Yuan supporter. In the mid-thirteenth century, the Mongols conquered Yunnan, a previously independent kingdom (Nanzhao), as part of its broader war against the mighty Song dynasty in China. Mongol governance in Yunnan shaped power sharing among local elites in ways that influenced their response to Daidu's fall in 1368, the Great Yuan's diminished power, and the Ming court's efforts to win recognition. This chapter charts Zhu Yuanzhang's diplomatic and military offensives in Yunnan with particular attention to his attempts to turn local experience of Mongol rule to his advantage.

Chapter 9, "The Chinggisid Fold," explores Zhu Yuanzhang's communications to two other groups with deep ties to the Chinggisid imperial enterprise. The first were senior Great Yuan military commanders and Mongol nobles, primarily those based in today's Liaoning and Jilin provinces to the northeast, the southern Mongolian steppe, and in Gansu and eastern Xinjiang. The second group consists of the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia. Memory of Chinggis Khan and the institutional arrangements of the Mongol empire (including hereditary relations of leadership) were defining elements of both groups. This chapter argues that Zhu Yuanzhang worked hard to win the first group's allegiance through a combination of military pressure, economic incentives, and argumentation. If he failed to sway the Great Khans and the Prince of Liang, the Ming founder did have some success among this critical group of Chinggisid supporters. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors invoked the Mongol empire's inheritance in communications with the Timurid and Moghul polities. However, the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative was not compelling to them.

Moving beyond Ming territory and the Chinggisid world, Part IV looks at how the early Ming court invoked the story of the Mongol empire in its relations with the kingdoms of Koryŏ, Japan, and the Great Việt (Đại Việt or most of the northern part of today's Vietnam), which today are commonly lumped together as East Asia. Chapter 10 reviews these three kingdoms' markedly different experiences of the Mongol empire. It argues that the early Ming court tried, with uneven success, to exploit divergent memory of the Mongol empire to pursue pressing contemporary issues of diplomatic recognition, border populations, and coastal security. It also considers how the early Ming court gathered information on events in Koryŏ, Japan, and the Great Việt, and how, on the basis of such intelligence, it tailored its Chinggisid narrative for different audiences.

The Conclusion reviews the book's primary arguments and offers a few observations about what the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative tells us about enduring issues of history and its uses: the legacy of empire, historical memory, and rising powers' attempts to create compelling narratives that justify their new place in the world.

Part I

The Wider Historical Context

1 Eurasia after the Fall

During the mid- and late fourteenth century, Eurasian courts shared a key reference point, the Mongol legacy. Even as the empire collapsed and a new world slowly emerged, remnants of the Mongol empire – from its bureaucratic and military institutions, ideas of legitimacy, and political culture to its physical manifestations such as architectural monuments, even seals of office and administrative papers – survived for decades, sometimes even longer.[1] People too were an invaluable asset. In the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape of the fourteenth century, aristocratic lineages and military units from the Mongol empire retained a recognizable coherence. They were potential allies that could provide military support and political legitimacy. The Mongol empire's remains coexisted with the emerging new order. In fact, they often made up its basic building blocks.

As individuals, families, and communities attempted to make sense of their worlds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Mongol empire's legacy was never far from view or mind. The Mongols figure prominently in the genesis stories of many Eurasian courts established at that time. To these courts, their subjects, allies, and rivals, the Mongols and their empire formed an essential, often central, feature of identity. Courts from Nanjing to Samarqand to Sarai often found it difficult to explain their origins, legitimacy, and standing at home and abroad without extensive reference to Chinggis and his descendants. Rulers like Zhu Yuanzhang, Tamerlane, and Toqtamïsh (Tokhtamish) of the Blue Horde (1342–1406) tried their best to turn the Mongol legacy to their advantage. Writing in a different context, the South Asian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam observes, "ideas and mental constructs, too, flowed across political boundaries in that world, and – even if they found specific local expression – enable us to see that what we are dealing with are not separate and comparable, but connected histories."[2]

[1] May (*Mongol Conquests*, pp. 81–97) reviews successors to the Mongol empire from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries.
[2] Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories," p. 748.

Since all major contemporary rivals claimed some connection to the Mongol legacy, any court that ignored the Chinggisids was conceding a valuable form of political legitimacy. Further, they all knew that their version of the past and its relation to the present would be contested at home and abroad. Put slightly differently, telling the tale of the Mongols' rise and fall was a competitive event. Some versions would triumph; others would fail. This is the broader context of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative.

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section sketches the Mongolian diaspora across Eurasia. It briefly traces, how as a result of the imperial enterprise, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mongols left the steppe and settled in distant lands. Rather than attempt a comprehensive treatment of a two-century pan-Eurasian development, it focuses on the Mongolian diaspora in the Delhi and Mamluk sultanates and the travels of one group, the Oirats. It then outlines relocated Mongols' fate as the major Chinggisid houses collapsed in the fourteenth century. Courts that emerged in the wake of the Mongol empire's collapse actively recruited former imperial personnel. The second section reviews the ways the Timurid and Moghul courts told the story of the Mongol empire to enhance their legitimacy, attract supporters, and command obedience.

My objective in this chapter is threefold. The first is to show that the Ming court was part of a wider historical moment in Eurasia. To appreciate what was distinctive and what was common to the strategies of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors, it is necessary to first examine how his contemporaries navigated such challenges. The second is to make clear that reception of the Ming dynasty's Chinggisid narrative was shaped by other courts' stories of the Mongols. My final and overarching goal is to foreground Chinggisid influence's pervasive nature in east Eurasia in the late fourteenth century. Only when we see east Eurasia really as a Chinggisid world can we appreciate why Zhu Yuanzhang talked about the Mongols so much. The Chinggisid world in which he and his contemporaries lived presented both opportunity and constraint in the pursuit of power and legitimacy.

The Mongolian Diaspora

A defining characteristic of the Mongol empire is movement.[3] To conquer and then to run their huge empire, the Mongols mobilized subjugated and allied populations, relocating them across the length and width of Eurasia. Chinese siege experts were deployed to West Asia, and Samarqand households settled

[3] For long-term demographic and ethnic consequences of such movement, see Golden, "Migrations"; May, *Mongol Conquests*, pp. 211–31.

north of today's Beijing.[4] One leading scholar, Thomas Allsen, calls the Mongols' collection of men of talent "a central theme in their imperial history."[5] Diplomatic and commercial agents of the empire traversed Eurasia. The Chinggisid state invested in an ambitious transportation infrastructure of relay stations, organized personnel to staff such hubs, and structured revenue streams for their maintenance.[6] It also worked to consolidate control of trading networks across the seas to pursue diverse diplomatic, military, and economic interests.

Less appreciated is the Mongolian diaspora. Continent-spanning campaigns propelled tens of thousands of men and women from the Mongolian steppe to North India, Eastern Europe, and West Asia. Between 1200 and 1300 (and beyond), Mongols were spread through much of Eurasia, from the Korean capital in Kaegyŏng to the Mamluk court in Egypt, from the courts of Dehli Sultanate and Gujarat in India to Golden Horde court of Sarai in Russia and nearly everywhere in between. Even the Song court recruited Mongols into its military forces.[7] Chinggis accelerated the diaspora with his famous division of conquered territories among his sons, who were to take up residence in their new and distant lands.[8] In fact, Mongols migrated even beyond the empire's expansive borders.

Let's start at West Asia's far edge. The Mamluk Sultanate (1215–1517) controlled today's Egypt, Syria, and west Saudi Arabia. Its military is famous for defeating Mongol armies on several occasions in the late thirteenth century. The Mamluk Sultanate developed into an important rival to the Ilkhanate, the Chinggisid house that ruled much of today's Iran, Azerbaijan, and eastern Turkey. Despite acute tension with the Ilkhanate, waves of immigrant Mongols sought shelter with Mamluk Sultanate.[9] Some Mongols had found themselves on the losing side in intra-Chinggisid house intrigue; some were victims of inter-Chinggisid house clashes. In other cases, the motive for flight is unclear.[10]

These newly arrived Mongols performed a variety of functions. Most served in the Mamluk military, which was the "main road to joining the upper caste."[11] The most famous instance was the 10,000 or 18,000 Oirats under the command of Turghay (son-in-law of Hülegü, the man who had founded the

[4] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters"; "Apportioned," pp. 185–86; "Mongols as Vectors," pp. 136–37; "Population Movements."
[5] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," p. 4.
[6] Shim, "Postal Roads."
[7] In 1279, these men were incorporated into the Yuan army. *YS*, 98.8.2517.
[8] Juvaynī, *World Conqueror*, vol. 1, pp. 42–43, cited in Allsen, "Sharing out the Empire," p. 172.
[9] Ayalon, "Wāfīdīya"; Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees." In addition, an indeterminate number reached the sultanate through the slave trade or as war captives. See Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 120–22. Halperin ("Kipchak Connection") discusses the slave trade that connected the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk sultanate.
[10] Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees," pp. 61–62.
[11] Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees"; Ayalon, "Wāfīdīya," p. 90.

Ilkhanate). They arrived in 1296 and were welcomed by Sultan Kitbugha, himself an Oirat.[12] Others played a role in diplomacy, serving in embassies to the Ilkhanate, translating Mongolian documents into Arabic, and providing intelligence.[13] Treatment of these Mongolian immigrants varied. Early on, some received the esteemed rank of *amīr* or commander and were made cupbearers, armor bearers, and masters of the robe, that is, they gained direct and highly prestigious access to the person of the reigning Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260–77). Further, they were initially settled in the capital rather than sent to the Syro-Palestinian coast, where non-Mongol immigrants had been relocated.[14] The daughters of elite Mongol immigrants were attractive marriage partners for local families of standing.[15] The activities of more humble Mongols, however, are poorly documented and little known. One Mamluk specialist concludes, "With so many Mongols on hand and such expertise among them, therefore, the Mamluks surely knew as much about the Mongols as did those regions that were actually under Mongol control."[16]

Let us now turn to South Asia. From the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, military conflict and political instability within the Mongol empire produced refugees who sought safety in India, home of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526).[17] "A whole quarter of the old city was assigned to asylum-seeking Mongol nobles in Delhi."[18] Some came to exercise influence over the young ruler Muqizz al-Dīn Kayqubād (r. 1287–90).[19] Scholars have suggested that a later ruler, Sultan Tughluq (r. 1320–24), was an immigrant of Turco-Mongol origin who rose to supreme power through the support of officers who had previously served under him in Afghanistan.[20] In 1334, the son of Chaghadaid Khan, Darmashirin, took refuge with yet another sultan, Muḥammad b. Tughluq (r. 1324–52), after his father was overthrown in

[12] Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 122–23; Ayalon, "Wāfīdīya," pp. 91, 99–101; Broadbridge, "Marriage, Family and Politics," 132–33; Halperin, "Kipchak Connection," p. 244; Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate," pp. 158–63. Many Oirat leaders were killed during an abortive coup in 1299–1300.

[13] Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 124, 137; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 19; Halperin, "Kipchak Connection," p. 243.

[14] Ayalon, "Wāfīdīya," pp. 94–99. Landa ("Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate," p. 180) notes that later much of the Oirat population seems to have been relocated to Atlit, Palestine, and northwestern Bilād al-Shām.

[15] Ayalon, "Wāfīdīya," p. 100; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 13; Halperin, "Kipchak Connection," p. 244. At least three of Baybars' wives were daughters of elite Mongol migrants. See Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 128, 135.

[16] Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 14.

[17] Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 80–82, 108–10, 115–16. Mongols spread as far as the wealthy maritime state of the Sultanate of Gujarat on the Arabian Sea in western India. See Wink, *Akbar*, pp. 30–31.

[18] Jackson, "Muslim India," p. 103.

[19] Jackson, "Muslim India," p. 104; Kumar, "Ignored," p. 51.

[20] Jackson, "Muslim India," p. 109.

Central Asia.[21] Darmashirin's son was part of a wave of people who fled to India at the time. Another influx arrived in the mid-1340s.[22]

The Chaghadaid nobility's presence became a prominent feature of court life under Sultan Muḥammad. The sultan's long-term companion, Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī (1285–1357) writes:

> The second occupation of Sultan Muḥammand during those few years in which he stayed in Delhi consisted in favoring and rewarding the Mongols. Year after year at the onset of winter, numbers of amirs of *tümen*s and thousands, and princesses and princes of the blood kept arriving ... For two or three months (each year) the sultan was engaged in nothing but granting favors and rewards.[23]

Muḥammad insisted that his distinguished Chaghadaid guests first show homage to his decree of investiture from the Caliph and then agree to "written undertakings" and offer acts of fealty.[24] Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī doesn't explain the Mongolian word *tümen*, presumably because his readers, educated elites in the Dehlhi Sultanate, knew its meaning. *Tümen* is a unit of ten thousand men, a standard element of Mongol governance that served both military and administrative functions. Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī does not tell his audience whether these Mongol commanders traveled with large contingents of armed men, but his description shows that the Dehli Sultanate knew and respected the status of Chinggisid nobles and senior Mongol military commanders. Further, Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī makes clear the sultan's desire to secure Mongol allegiance on mutually acceptable terms.

The aforementioned suggests that Mongol elites commanded respect beyond the Mongol empire, in fact even among enemies. Although their influence may have been disruptive, elite members of the Mongolian diaspora won some measure of acceptance. Sultan Muḥammad's high profile patronage was likely predicated on the belief that public recognition by Mongol elites, even when they were seeking asylum, generated valuable political capital. The arrival of outlanders of such elevated status challenged established notions of proper order and hierarchy in some quarters.[25] Scholars debate Mongol asylum seekers' status in Mamluk sultanate. One authority concludes they "were on the whole far from seats of power ... [they] did not have entrée into the higher circles of the sultanate."[26] In contrast, one study highlights the incorporation of Mongols into the sultan's prestigious military units and examples of migrant officers who "reached the highest rank in the Mamluk military."[27]

[21] Jackson, "Mongols and Delhi," p. 132. [22] Jackson, *Mongols and Islamic World*, p. 396.
[23] Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrzūshāhī*, cited in Jackson, "Mongols and the Delhi," pp. 149–50.
[24] Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrzūshāhī*, cited in Jackson, "Mongols and the Delhi," p. 150.
[25] Kumar, "Ignored," p. 49. [26] Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," p. 129.
[27] Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees," p. 75. For a chart of immigrant officers, see pp. 65–66.

As later chapters will show, Mongols and other Great Yuan personnel were incorporated into the Ming military. Some received prestigious titles and preferential treatment such as housing and gifts from the throne. They did not control the levers of supreme power, but then again few in the Ming polity did. At the risk of oversimplification, one can say that a few former Chinggisid personnel secured exceptional patronage and standing from their new lords. A larger proportion served as officers, who were in the middle to upper echelons of the military. The majority, and the least well documented, provided welcomed military expertise, especially as mounted archers.

More common than relocation to places like the Mamluk or Delhi Sultanate, however, was internal migration within the greater Mongol empire. The courts and armies of Chinggisid great houses and lesser nobles throughout Europe were composed of relocated men and women from the Ikires, Oirat, Qongirat, Kereyit, Merkid, Naiman, Kipchak and other lineages from the Mongolian steppe. They served as soldiers, commanders, translators, political advisors, envoys, religious specialists, and administrators. When interactions among the great Chinggisid houses were extensive, men like Arghun Aqa and Bolad did serial service at several courts from Persia to China.[28] In time, Mongolian migrants became more firmly settled within the sphere of a single great house, even while preserving varying degrees of ancestral identities as men and women of the Oirat, Önggüt, Qongirat, Kereyit and other communities.

One relatively well-studied example is the Oirat.[29] After forming an alliance with the Chinggisids in 1207, men and women from leading Oirat lineages were incorporated into the upper echelons of the expanding empire.[30] They married into the Chinggisid imperial family, served in the Great Khan's guard, and commanded military forces in campaigns throughout Eurasia. As a consequence, elite Oirat lineages ended up in China, Mongolia, the Ilkhanate, and the Mamluk Sultanate. Although in the long-term these Oirat lineages (and other less well-documented groups) assimilated into local society, in the short- and mid-term, they retained a clear sense of lineage identity and interests. One study concludes that preservation of Oirat identity depended on ties to the Ilkhanate ruling house, whose "support secured the high status of the Oirats and united them."[31] As the Ilkhanate disintegrated in the 1330s, Oirat power networks became more fragmented and narrowly regional. Some offered their allegiance to the Timurid dynasty. Their new status there may have been more modest than what it had previously been in the Ilkhanate. However, "their

[28] Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*; Lane, "Arghun Aqa"; Kim, "Unity of the Mongol Empire."
[29] Broadbridge, "Marriage, Family and Politics"; Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate"; "Imperial Sons-in-Law on the Move"; Zhao, *Marriage*, pp. 143–64.
[30] Broadbridge, "Marriage, Family and Politics."
[31] Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate," p. 172.

presence is unmistakable and clearly points to the preservation of their tribal identity (even if only in terms of their tribal name) at least until the early-fifteenth century."[32] Elite Oirat lineages in some places seem to have maintained control over Oirat housemen well into the fourteenth century.

If we take a step back, we can see that the Oirats were part of a broader Mongolian diaspora across Eurasia.[33] These groups, whose self-identity varied widely and is seldom known in any detail, had left the Mongolian steppe and its environs as a result of the Chinggisid imperial enterprise.[34] By the early fourteenth century and sometimes earlier, many of these Mongolian communities in West and Central Asia had adopted Islam and had intermarried with local families. When Chinggisid houses collapsed in the early and mid-fourteenth centuries, members of the Mongolian diaspora faced questions about their allegiances and interests. Especially for elite clans, identity was rooted in relations with the local Chinggisid ruling house, such as the Ilkhanate, the Chaghadaid khanate, the Golden Horde, and the Great Yuan, which in turn provided ties to the broader Mongol empire. Yet, as the previous sections on the Mongol diaspora in the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates suggest, individuals (and often entire communities) were open to new patrons and new sources of power.[35]

For men like Tamerlane, leaders of the Moghul khanate, and Zhu Yuanzhang, the diaspora was another facet of the Mongol empire's inheritance. As living ties to a glorious past, "Mongols abroad" might be vilified as enemies, treasured as allies, or absorbed as the building blocks of new empires. They could not, however, be ignored. Polities that emerged as Chinggisid rule collapsed actively courted the Mongolian diaspora's support. If skillfully exploited, Mongol elites could improve new regimes' military and political standing. If they were ignored or pushed away, their talents could well end up in rivals' hands. The diaspora and its incorporation into local regimes' key political and military organs contributed to the further transmission of knowledge regarding the Mongol empire's institutions and the special charisma of the Chinggisid line throughout Eurasia. The diaspora helped build and sustain the Chinggisid world.

[32] Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate," p. 176.

[33] Cf. Kaplonski, "Mongolian Impact," p. 252. Wink ("India and the Turko-Mongol Frontier," p. 224) suggests "about 170,000 men, accompanied by 680,000 women and children and perhaps 17 million sheep in accompanying camps and herds, were involved in the conquest and occupation of Iran and adjacent areas."

[34] Heywood ("Filling the Black Hole," pp. 111–13) argues that the genesis of the Ottoman polity should be sought in the migration of Turkic elements following the instability ushered in by Noghai's death circa 1299.

[35] For an Oirat man who sought service at the Mamluk court, subsequently traveled as an envoy to the Ilkhanate and eventually served twice as a Mamluk envoy to post-Ilkhanid Baghdad, see Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees," p. 74.

Stories of the Mongols

With the exception of the Golden Horde, which controlled Russia and the Kipchak steppe, all great Chinggisid houses across Eurasia collapsed in the fourteenth century. Later chapters will explore the Great Yuan's fall and the Great Ming's rise. This section looks briefly at developments in West and Central Asia. The objective is to show how the Chinggisid legacy figured in new polities' emergence across Eurasia in the fourteenth century. Comprehensive consideration of the Mongols' impact would include everything from military institutions, transportation infrastructure, tax regimes, and diplomatic protocol to political ideology, religious patronage, ethnogenesis, and gender. The coverage here is more focused. It looks at how the Timurid and Moghul polities, which took shape in the second half of the fourteenth century, turned the Mongol legacy to their advantage in the wake of the collapse of the great Chinggisid houses. That in turn helps contextualize the Great Ming's efforts to come to terms with the Great Yuan.

During the fourteenth century, three great Mongol houses that ruled much of West and Central Asia fell into sharp decline. The survivors emerged transformed. In 1301, the House of Ögödei (Chinggis Khan's second son and first successor), centered in today's northeast Xinjiang and South Kazakhstan, fell. It had experienced vigorous expansion under Qaidu (1236–1301), but his death opened the way to renewed dominance of the House of Chaghadai, which had been both his ally and rival.[36] The House of Chaghadai (Chinggis' third son), which at its height ruled much of today's Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and parts of southern Kazakhstan and south Xinjiang, fell into a period of extended instability beginning in 1334, following Darmashirin's deposition.[37] In 1335, the sultan of the Ilkhanate, Abū Saʿīd, died without an heir. In retrospect, we may say that this ended the Ilkhanate's effective control of its territory. However, at the time, "many people in Persia ... were convinced that Mongol rule would survive, for there was plainly no lack of influential Mongol leaders and politicians, nor of princes belonging to the most diverse lines of descent from Chinggis Khan."[38]

In this twilight of empire, the Mongol legacy loomed large. Many leading military commanders had formerly served the Houses of Chaghadai or Hülegü. Some wars were depicted as efforts to restore the Ilkhanate or Chaghadaid khanate.[39] Chinggisid nobles were selected as puppet rulers to legitimate what

[36] Biran, *Qaidu*; "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 49–54.
[37] Biran, "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 54–60; Millward, "Eastern Central Asia," pp. 261–67.
[38] Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," p. 2.
[39] Melville, "End of the Ilkhanate and After," pp. 323–26; Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," pp. 5–10; Wing, *Jalayirids*.

usually proved to be short-lived regimes. A few sought to rule as well as reign. To bolster their standing, some polities seized control of places closely associated with Mongol rule. One scholar describes Tabriz, which had been an Ilkhanate capital, as "a locus of Ilkhanid political charisma, and thus . . . the primary goal for members of the fourteenth century post-Ilkhanid military elite."[40] Even those with no interest in restoring Chinggisid houses still found the Mongol legacy useful. For instance, the Sarbadārs, who had no legitimist claims, recognized (albeit intermittently) the authority of a prominent Chinggisid aspirant. They also used military institutions such as the "little thousand," previously a building block for political identity and organization in the Mongol empire.[41] In 1351, one Chaghadaid commander skewered what he perceived as the ridiculous posing of the ruler of Herat. He wrote, "Of what descent is he that is making pretensions to the sultanate? . . . How can a Tāzīk (Tajik) pretend to be a king (*pādeshāh*)?"[42] His point was that the ruler of Herat lacked Chinggisid descent and was therefore utterly unqualified to be a king.

Rather than attempt to trace the emergence of the dozens of regimes from the wreckage of the great Chinggisid houses in Central Asia, the following section explores two particularly influential instances, both of which developed ties to the Great Ming. These are the Timurid and Moghul polities, which came to control much of the territory of the three great Mongol houses noted earlier. As ambitious men capitalized on the collapse of Chinggisid houses, they pursued strategies closely associated with the Mongol empire. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mongol rulers were renowned and notorious for their brutal campaigns of conquest and ostentatious displays of patronage. Tamerlane used similar methods. His military campaigns secured new sources of food, wealth, and labor, which demonstrated his fitness as a ruler. They also kept his armies occupied. His dramatic use of terror – the sack of Khwārazm, the massacre at Isfahan, minarets built of severed heads – discouraged local resistance and foregrounded his singular determination.[43] At the same time, Tamerlane's lavish architectural projects advertised his

[40] Wing, "Rich in Goods and Abounding in Wealth," p. 313. For elaboration, see Wing, *Jalayirids*, p. 3.

[41] Several Sarbadār leaders recognized Togha Temür's authority, casting coins in his name and vowing to pay him taxes. Jā'ūn-i Qurbān arose from a "little thousand" (*hazāracha*), a unit under the command of Arghūn Āqā. See Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," pp. 19, 23, 25, 27, 29. One thing that distinguished the Sarbadārs from nearly all contemporary rivals was the lack of a Mongol shadow khan. See Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," p. 35.

[42] Potter, "Herat," p. 194. As Potter ("Herat," p. 195) notes, part of Tamerlane's justification for attacking Herat was that "these lands have always belonged to the Mongol kings." The local Herat lacked a legitimate claim on them.

[43] Clavijo (*Narrative of the Spanish Embassy*, p. 173) recalls tales of towers built of skulls located outside Danghan.

commitment to high culture and his prodigious wealth.[44] Mongols held no monopoly on terror and patronage, but they had pursued both strategies most recently and most spectacularly in Central Asia. One authority argues that Tamerlane deliberately emulated their example.[45]

In conjunction with military campaigns and flamboyant display, Tamerlane and others appealed more directly to the Mongol legacy to demonstrate their superiority as sovereigns. These campaigns of persuasion seldom told a single story, because their audiences were diverse, which owed much to the consequences of Mongol rule in Eurasia. As noted, the Mongols' rise and rule had accelerated social and physical mobility. Their fall in the fourteenth century generated the dangers and opportunities. It also increased mobility. Rulers wooed diverse allies and oversaw complex populations.[46] Armies of fourteenth-century Iranian dynasties, such as the Karts of Herat and the Mozaffarids of Fars, incorporated Tajiks, Khalaj Turks, Baluch, Ghurids, Mongols, dervishes from the Sarbadārs, and Khorasanians among others.[47] Many ruling houses, including the Jalayirids in northwestern Iran and Iraq, the Injurid dynasty of Fars, the Mozaffarids, the Shabankara (based in a peripheral region of Fars), the Karts as well as families with bureaucratic traditions, were tied to Mongol rule through previous military alliances, administrative service, and marriage allegiances to the Ilkhans.[48] Manz observes, "In the society of 14th–15th century Iran and Central Asia, Turkic and Iranian alike, the events that had shaped the present most immediately were those of Mongol conquest and rule. The drama of the Mongol invasion, the administration of the great khans, and the rivalries of the Chinggisid *ulus*es mattered to many people beyond the Chinggisid dynasty itself."[49]

Thus, leaders needed to explain their connections to the Chinggisids. Written between 1357 and 1362, the verse chronicle *Tale of Ghāzan* (*Ghāzan-nāma*), was dedicated to Sultan Shaikh Uvais, the Jalayirid ruler (1356–74). In it, the author speaks of "the daulut-i Ghāzan Khāni," or Ghāzan Khan's charismatic good fortune. Ghāzan (1271–1304) had reigned over the Ilkhanate from 1295 to 1304. According to *Tale of Ghāzan*, Shaikh Uvais was direct heir to Ghāzan's special fortune.[50] In other words, Shaikh Uvais and his dynasty were legitimate successors to Ghāzan and the Ilkhanate; they deserved the respect and obedience the Mongols had commanded.

[44] Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, pp. 17–49.
[45] Manz, "Mongol History," p. 138; "Tamerlane and the Symbolism," pp. 118–19; "Tamerlane's Career," pp. 4–5; "Empire of Tamerlane," p. 287.
[46] Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 48–52.
[47] Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 50–51.
[48] Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 44–47; "Mongol History," pp. 132–34.
[49] Manz, "Mongol History," p. 132. She also notes (p. 133), "For the local rulers of Iran in the late-fourteenth century, the history of the Mongols was also the history of their dynasty, and to ignore the Mongol system was to sacrifice some part of their past and their legitimacy."
[50] Melville, "History and Myth," p. 142.

Tamerlane and his court forged ties to Chinggis Khan's charismatic legitimacy with even greater energy. He encouraged stories of his youth that resembled those of Chinggis Khan.[51] He periodically used a title, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction," which was associated with Chinggis and Alexander the Great.[52] Tamerlane married a Chinggisid princess and thus acquired the title Imperial Son-in-law (M. *güregen*; P. *kūrkān*/*gūrgān*).[53] He established a Chinggisid ruler (from the Ögödeid line), in whose name and authority, he ostensibly ruled.[54] Tamerlane issued coins inscribed with his titles (either *amīr* or Imperial Son-in-law) and his Chinggisid ruler's name.[55] He acted as patron to several Chinggisid nobles. He first offered refuge to a claimant to the Blue Horde, Toqtamïsh (who became khan of the Golden Horde) and later to a refugee from the Great Yuan court (who eventually became Great Khan in eastern Mongolia).[56] Tamerlane stood as a staunch defender of Mongol customary law.[57] Court-commissioned illuminated manuscripts from the early Timurid dynasty portray court members as Mongols.[58] Tamerlane's court-sponsored genealogies purported to show a shared a common ancestry with Chinggis.[59]

Genealogy and history often walked hand in hand. The *Muʿizz al-ansāb fī shajarat al-ansāb* is an anonymous Timuro-Chinggisid genealogical history compiled circa 1426–27 by order of Shāhrukh (1377–1447), one of Tamerlane's early successors. It is another example of keen early Timurid interest in Chinggisid nobility. History was personalized rather than abstract. Timurid chroniclers stressed that Tamerlane's ancestor, Qarachar Barlas, was both an influential commander in Chaghadai's army and his lord's personal advisor.[60] In different terms, the Chaghadai khanate and other Mongol groups originated in the Chinggisid imperial structure and drew on its imperial

[51] Subtelny, "Tamerlane and His Descendants," p. 171.

[52] Chann ("Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction," p. 99) notes that only with the popularity of Yazdi's *Ẓafar-nāma* (completed in 1425) was the connection between Tamerlane and the title solidified for posterity.

[53] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," p. 102; Subtelny, "Tamerlane and His Descendants," p. 171. The Chinggisid woman was Sarāy Mulk Hānūm, daughter of Qazan Hān, last khan of the Chaghatai khanate and wife of Amīr Ḥusayn. See Blair, "Timurid Signs," p. 558; Manz, "Temür," p. 184.

[54] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 101–2; Manz, *Rise and Rule*, pp. 14–15; "Temür," p. 184. Tamerlane's first Chinggisid khan was Soyurghatmïsh.

[55] Komaroff, "Epigraphy of Timurid Coinage," pp. 213, 215; Blair, "Timurid Signs," p. 558.

[56] Manz, "Temür," pp. 185, 187. On Toqtamïsh's rule and his war with Tamerlane, see Vásáry, "Jochid Realm," pp. 81–85. The Great Yuan refugee was Bunyashiri (Puṇyaśrī). See Honda, "On the Genealogy," pp. 239, 243–44.

[57] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 100–1.

[58] Shea, "Mongol Cultural," p. 36.

[59] Mano, "Amīru-Teimūru," p. 111; Woods, "Tīmur's Genealogy," pp. 99–100.

[60] Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 39. The *Muʿizz al-ansāh*, an expansion of Rashid al-Dīn's chronicle, includes a "full genealogy of the Barlas tribe, beginning with Qarachar." See Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 40.

ideology after the empire's fall.[61] Tamerlane's forefathers in the Barlas family had served the Chinggisid state since the early thirteenth century, holding posts in the imperial guard, the *keshig*. Generation after generation, the Barlas family maintained an enduring alignment with the imperial guard, the general staff of the military, and key administrative posts in the palace and central government in Daidu.[62] Even when Mongol power failed, imperial Chinggisid institutions remained as important as family memory and established normative expectations. It functioned as a link to the past and a guide for the future. Tamerlane adopted the *keshig* structure to organize his military resources, expand his political control, and showcase his commitment to shared values and memories of his supporters, who came "of age within the web of Chinggisid sovereignty and Mongol political culture."[63] Tamerlane's standing army leaned heavily on Turco-Mongolian Chaghataid soldiers, "who had originated as the nomad population of the Ulus Chaghatay."[64]

Seizure of key Ilkhanid sites strengthened Tamerlane's claims on Chinggisid authority. In 1384, Tamerlane seized Sulṭāniyya, the location of the mausoleum of Öljeitü (r. 1305–16), an Ilkhnate ruler. Later Ilkhanids were enthroned there. One Timurid specialist suggests, "from this time on, Tamerlane implicitly laid claim to the Ilkhanid inheritance."[65] Early Timurid historians themselves were often embedded within a Chinggisid world, depending on Mongolian commanders for details of military institutions or gleaning information when serving as tutors to Chinggisid princes.[66]

Tamerlane's extensive ties to the Chinggisid legacy struck non-Timurid visitors to his court. In his explanation of the background of Tamerlane and "the Tatars," the Arab historian and career official, Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), rehearses the genealogy of Chinggis and his descendants (including Qubilai) through the mid-fourteenth century. He identifies Tamerlane as "an emir of the house of the Banū Jaghaṭāi," noting that that he "was the guardian of a boy who was also related to him by descent from Jaghaṭāi through male ancestors, all of them kings, and this one Tīmūr ibn Ṭūghān, was their cousin on the father's side. He became guardian of one them, the heir to the throne named Maḥmūd, whose mother Ṣurghatmish he married."[67] Jaghaṭāi is the Persianized version of Chaghadai, one of Chinggis khan's sons and founder of the Chaghadai House

[61] Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 29. Munkh-Erdene ("Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From?") argues more broadly for state formations' importance for steppe identity, stressing the transformative impact of the Chinggisid imperial enterprise for both Mongols and subjugated peoples. Kramarovsky ("Culture of the Golden Horde," pp. 256–57) similarly highlights the "state-bound" nature of identity and culture in the context of the Golden Horde.
[62] Grupper, "A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," esp. p. 37.
[63] Grupper, "A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," esp. p. 96.
[64] Manz, *Power*, p. 15 [65] Manz, "Temür," p. 185.
[66] Woods, "Timurid Historiography," pp. 90, 92–93, 100.
[67] Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 45–46.

noted previously. Likewise Ibn ʿArabshāh (1389–1450) writes that he has seen a genealogy of Tamerlane "traced without a break to Chinggis Khan through females."[68] He further notes, "after conquering Transoxiana and rising above his companions, he married princesses and therefore they gave him the surname Kurkan, which in the Mongol language means son-in-law, since he had gained affinity with kings and enjoyed the highest authority in their courts.[69] A bitter critic of Tamerlane, Ibn ʿArabshāh begrudgingly acknowledges Tamerlane's skill in exploiting Chinggisid connections to forge alliances. Through a marriage tie to the Moghul king," Tamerlane "gained their friendship and brought them to peace and tranquility . . . and became safe from their onslaughts and attacks."[70] Through his observation of *yasa*, "the law of Chinggis Khan," Tamerlane again "was safe from their enmity and repelled their wiles and power to injure."[71] Among the non-Timurid observers just noted, Ibn ʿArabshah was the most critical of Tamerlane but also the most diligent in gathering information, even if many were second-hand accounts.[72] He grasped Tamerlane's use of the Chinggisid legacy to advance his interests.

Tamerlane and his court historians repeatedly turned to the Chinggisid past to justify Tamerlane's actions and ambitions abroad. Whatever traction these appeals gained grew from the fact that neighbors were often just as much a product of the Mongol empire as was Tamerlane. He legitimated his claims to control over revenue from Khwārazm cities by saying that Chinggis had granted the territory to the House of Chaghadai, whose rights Tamerlane was now restoring. Similar justification was offered for seizure of former Ilkanate lands such as Khurasan in 1381.[73] In communications with the Ottoman sultan Yildirim and the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria al-Malik al-Zahir Barquq (r. 1382–99), Tamerlane denounced one Chinggisid house (the Toluids) for their abuse of authority and betrayal of Chinggis' wishes. Tamerlane was trying to explain why his seizure of lands outside Chaghadaid territory was right and necessary.[74]

Tamerlane's Chinggisid-inflected rulership traveled well. Early Ottoman leaders were familiar with Chinggis Khan's political legacy, which had figured prominently in their own formation.[75] In a letter to one of Tamerlane's immediate successors (Shāhrukh), the early fifteenth century Ottoman sultan Meḥmed (r. 1413–21) repeatedly refers to the Ilkhanids, mentions Ilkhanid-Mongol terms like *quriltai* (lineage conclave), *yarligh* (decree), and uses Tamerlane's title

[68] ʿArabshah, *Life*, p. 4. [69] ʿArabshah, *Life*, p. 4. [70] ʿArabshah, *Life*, p. 18.
[71] ʿArabshah, *Life*, p. 18.
[72] McChesney, "Note on the Life"; Manz, "Johannes Schiltberger and Other," pp. 56–57.
[73] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 104–5. [74] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 106–8.
[75] Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, p. 195. For other ties between the early Ottomans and the Mongols, see Lindner, "How Mongol"; "Forging of Ottoman"; Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, p. 195; Golden, "Migrations," pp. 117, 119.

güregen (Chinggisid son-in-law).[76] Previously, when Tamerlane campaigned in Ottoman territory, he sought local Turco-Mongol groups' allegiance. He appealed to recent history, writing: "We have the same ancestors . . . you are therefore truly a shoot from my stock . . . your last king was Artana who died in the Faith [that is, Islam] and the greatest king in the realms of Rum was your servant . . . why should you be slaves of a man who is a son of slaves set free by Al-i Saljuk."[77] The Ilkhanate had appointed the king of Artana (or Eretna) as governor. In the wake of the Ilkhanate's collapse, he declared himself sultan and ruled his own principality in central and eastern Anatolia until his death in 1352. Here Tamerlane invokes recent historical memory of Mongol rule to undermine Ottoman legitimacy and forge a bond of common descent.

This book's focus is use of the Chinggisid legacy, thus the previous description has hewed to Tamerlane's efforts to create ties to Chinggis Khan, the house of Chaghatai, and their descendant to advance his interests. However, Tamerlane strove to "build an imperial image and character from a widely disparate set of sources and models across the region of his conquests."[78] The next section considers another example of how an important Central Asian ruling elite put its multifaceted inheritance to work.

Moghul Khanate or Ulus-i Moghul

Although far from unified in a political sense, the lineages that comprised the Moghul Khanate considered themselves to be part of the Chaghatai Khanate. Many lineages were part of the extended Mongolian diaspora with long histories of service to the Chinggisids.[79] Centered in the Ili region, the lineages of what scholars sometimes identify as the Moghul Khanate were active in much of the area that today includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang of the People's Republic of China.[80] In the first half of the fourteenth century, the Chaghadaid khanate included a mix of urban and rural sedentary Iranian populations with various Turco-Mongolian communities.[81] Long after the Chaghadaid khanate politically imploded in the mid-fourteenth century, the Moghul khanate retained key features of Mongol governance. It issued written documents in the Mongolian language. It valued

[76] Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, pp. 204–5.
[77] ʿArabshah, *Tamerlane,* p. 178. Cited in Kadafar, *Two Worlds*, p. 186, fn. 22.
[78] Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, p. 4.
[79] Mano ("Moghūlistan," pp. 49–52) identifies fourteen Turco-Mongolian lineages whose histories predated Chinggis' rise and seven groups that seem to have formed in the fourteenth century.
[80] These paragraphs draw heavily from Kim Hodong, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads." See also Tian Weijiang, "Shisi shijichu," pp. 80–82; Millward, "Eastern Central Asia," pp. 262–63; Biran, "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 58–60.
[81] Golden, "Migrations," p. 116.

Chinggisid law (*yasa*). Its members called themselves the Mongol Empire (*Mongghol ulus*). Members of the Moghul khanate sometimes expressed disdain for their Timurid rivals. Tamerlane, in their eyes, was a usurper, who, lacking proper qualifications to rule, had been forced to put a Chinggisid puppet on the throne to provide an appearance of legitimacy. Tamerlane's people were dismissed as *Qara'unas*, people of mixed ancestry, lacking a proper Chaghadaid pedigree.[82]

The importance of Chaghadaid descent was violently revealed in 1365. That year, the head of one Moghul lineage, Qamar al-Dīn, seized power and arrogated the title of khan. It sparked immediate resistance among the khanate's lineages, in large part because he was not of Chinggisid descent. The ensuing succession weakened the Moghul khanate and opened the door to Tamerlane, who sensed an opportunity to expand his realm. The struggle between the Moghul Khanate and Tamerlane was also a competition for the Mongol empire's mantle. One historian suggests, "the war between the Timurids and the Moghuls in the latter half of the fourteenth century was waged not simply for booty or conquest but for the unification of the Chaghatai Khanate."[83] Put differently, despite political upheaval and the lack of a single dominant khan, the Chaghatai khanate remained a broadly accepted political, military, and social entity of unquestioned legitimacy. Modern historians regularly speak of the Chaghatai khanate's collapse in the mid-fourteenth century, but as we saw with the Ilkhanate's fall, contemporaries did not perceive a clear rupture.[84] Restoration remained within reach.[85]

Haydar Dūghlāt's sixteenth century chronicle *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* provides one of the only surviving narrative sources for the Moghul khanate. It offers several clues about the place of the Chinggisid legacy in the fourteenth century. He provides a brief genealogy of Tughlugh-Temür Khan, the first ruler to appear in his history of the Moghuls. It traces Tughlugh-Temür's ancestry to Chaghatai, son of Chinggis, and back to Alan Qoa or Alan the Fair.[86] Mongols traced their ancestry back to Alan the Fair, the woman whose five sons were believed to be ancestors of the major Mongol aristocratic lineages. Dūghlāt refers several times to a letter of patent issued by Tughlugh-Temür Khan to Amir Bolaji. The patent renewed nine privileges originally granted by Chinggis Khan to Amir Bolaji's forbear.[87] The patent

[82] Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 38; Golden, "Migrations," p. 117. In turn, the Timurids called the Moghuls, "robbers" (*jätä/chete*).
[83] Kim, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads," p. 318.
[84] Kim, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads," p. 317. For one articulation (among many) of the dissolution, see Mano Eiji, "Jūgo seiki shotō," pp. 1–2.
[85] Reunification efforts circa 1360–65 failed but suggest a sense that restoration was possible.
[86] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 3).
[87] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 9).

was a valuable artifact and legal instrument that was passed down in Dūghlāt's family. He notes that it was "written in the Mongol language."[88] These details show the Chinggisid legacy's importance within the Moghul khanate after the Mongol empire's collapse.

In contrast to early Timurid chronicles and genealogies that systematically linked Tamerlane to Chinggis, Haydar Dūghlāt's account of the fourteenth century does not foreground the Mongol legacy. In part this may result from the extreme paucity of sources available for his use.[89] He went so far as to supplement his history with materials created at the rival Timurid court. Another factor may be Dūghlāt's understanding of sovereignty, which he links to Tughlugh-Temür's conversion to Islam and God's will.[90] Nonetheless, evidence of Turco-Mongolian political culture appears throughout his account. Archery, hunting, and falconry are listed among things important to administrative affairs and running the kingdom.[91] In the face of a larger Timurid army, Moghul forces resort to use of the rain stone.[92] Mongols believed that the rain stone could summon rain, snow, and sleet, whose sudden appearance could dramatically alter the balance of battle. The rain stone, thus, was an important part of Mongol culture and lore. Dūghlāt notes the "ancient Mongol custom" of the khan's wife's broad discretionary powers, the use of the *tümen* as a military/fiscal unit, and "the ancient Mongol" custom of holding a great feast when the new *koumiss* (fermented mare's milk) arrived in spring.[93] Dūghlāt felt all these Mongol practises were important to understand the Moghul khanate's history, but unlike the Timurid court, he does not invoke the Chinggisid legacy to explain political change or justify seizure of power.

Yet, we know from this and other sources that Chinggisid charisma did figure in contemporary perceptions of Moghul khan's authority. After Esen-Buqa Khan died without a clear successor, "chaos made its way among the nation." Bolaji (who was Dūghlāt's ancestor) then "decided to locate a khan so that order might return to the kingdom." After an arduous search, a potential successor was located. Bolaji then "raised Tughlugh-Temür to the khanate, and he secured all Moghulistan, indeed the entire territory of Chaghadai."[94]

[88] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 4, 20).

[89] Aubin ("Le Khanat," p. 16) adduces relative geographic isolation and lack of strong historiographical traditions as reasons for the documentary famine.

[90] Earlier in the fourteenth century, the Chaghadaid khan Darmashirin had converted and attempted draconian enforcement of Islamic law. See Biran, "Chaghadaids and Islam."

[91] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 2). Dūghlāt is describing his own skills here.

[92] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 12).

[93] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 3, 8, 19). Mano ("Moghūlistan," pp. 52–55) notes the Moghul khanate's use of units of 100 and 1,000 men and military forces organized into a right wing, a left wing, and a center. Tamerlane's titles included Amīr Tīmūr[-i?] Tūmān. Aubin ("Le Khanat," p. 54) suggests that *tūmān*/*tümen* here functioned like a name.

[94] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 3–4).

A similar search for a hidden-away Chinggisid adolescent occurred after the death of Qamar al-Dīn, the non-Chinggisid tribal leader noted earlier whose reign brought Moghul lands into "chaos."[95] Yazdi's *Ẓafar-nāma* (written at the Timurid court) has Tughlugh-Temür showering "inestimable favor" on Tamerlane, including the governorship of Kish "along with his hereditary *tümen* and all its appurtenances and privileges."[96] The khan relinquished "control of affairs of the realm to the Sahib-Qiran's good judgment."[97] Yazdi's account was written early in the fifteenth century, and we may hesitate to conclude that it accurately reflects late fourteenth century views. Yet, it strongly suggests that the Chaghadaid khan's approval mattered enough to have him mouth words of praise for Tamerlane. We do know that marriage alliances to the Moghul khan held appeal for contemporaries. When the late fourteenth-century Moghul khan, Khiżr Khwāja, concluded a truce with Tamerlane, he granted Tamerlane a woman from the khanly harem.[98] Decades later, the ambitious Oirat leader Esen demanded that the reigning Moghul ruler, Ways Khan (r. 1417–32), turn over his sister as ransom.[99] She wed Esen's son, Amāsānji.[100] Indeed before coming face-to-face with the defeated Ways Khan, Esen (in Dūghlāt's retelling) reflects to himself, "If he really is a descendant of Chinggis Khan, he will certainly not bow to me but will look upon me as a liege man."[101] For the people of the Moghul khanate, there was no doubt that Chinggisid descent was a sine qua non for rulership. They were equally convinced that their political world – indeed their entire culture – was firmly rooted in Chingisid ways.

Concluding Comments

"Having returned to their native steppes after expulsion from China," observes one scholar, "the Mongols seemed isolated from the external world, having forfeited all links with their kinsmen, who became scattered across Eurasia in the period of military expansionism."[102] As noted, the Mongolian diaspora did result in the relocation of men and women from the steppe. Less clear is the degree of isolation after the empire's fall. First, many – perhaps even the majority – of Mongols did not return to the steppe. Instead, they became influential political and military actors in new lands. Some returned to the

[95] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 13, 18–19).
[96] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 8).
[97] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 8–9).
[98] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 18).
[99] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 23).
[100] Mano Eiji, "Jūgo seiki shotō," p. 23
[101] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 23).
[102] Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, p. 113.

steppe, but ties to Daidu, Samarqand, or Baghdad did not vanish. Newly ascendant powers like the Timurids, Moghuls, and Ming dynasty actively sought the allegiance of Mongols on the steppe and beyond. Lineages, clans, and individuals reconsidered their interests in light of new sources of patronage, power, and prestige. Transfers of allegiance might involve physical relocation but did not necessarily sever old ties. Indeed, the ability to exploit such connections, which often transcended dynastic borders, was one reason newly ascendant courts recruited former Chinggisid personnel.[103] This chapter has also shown that institutions such as military/fiscal units of 100, 1,000, and 10,000 remained in use throughout Central and West Asia. In a word, the Mongol legacy remained a shared reference point across Eurasia.

To secure the loyalty of those tied to the Chinggisid enterprise, all parties crafted tales of the Mongol empire and their relations to it. The early Timurid court strongly appealed to the Chinggisid legacy, linking Tamerlane to Chinggis Khan and his descendants every way it could. Tamerlane incorporated wholesale institutions and lineages from the Mongol empire. The same was even truer for the Moghul khanate. Mongol nobles enjoyed privileged status even beyond the empire in places like Cairo and Delhi. Bearing all this in mind, one can begin to imagine the staggering difficulties confronting Zhu Yuanzhang when he tried to persuade Moghul and Timurid rulers that he – a non-Chingisid, not even a Chinggisid son-in-law – was qualified to tell the story of the Mongol empire, including its irreversible demise. More outrageous still was his claim that he was the Great Yuan's sole legitimate successor.

[103] Amitai ("Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 132–33) notes family reunions among Mongols who transferred their loyalty to the Mamluk sultanate.

2 Daidu's Fall

Introduction

Compared with the Mongol empire's rise, glory, and collapse, the Great Yuan court's fate in the decades following Daidu's fall in 1368 is poorly known. To reconstruct its history, scholars commonly rely on materials produced by its principal rival, the Ming dynasty. Such sources are as indispensable as they are problematic. This book argues that the Ming court carefully crafted a historical narrative. It depicted the Great Yuan as a ruined ruling house fast descending into desperadoes wandering a vast, desolate steppe. Later chapters explore the Ming court's view of things. Here the focus is the Yuan court. To tell its story requires a bit of historical reorientation and greater reliance on archeological materials than perhaps is common.

Rather than look at the Great Yuan court in the late fourteenth century as a footnote to the Ming dynasty's establishment, this chapter foregrounds connections to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when Mongols ruled much of Eurasia. Such a perspective puts the events of 1368–98 in clearer historical context. It also serves as a counter-narrative to the story told by the Ming court, which had a strong interest in severing the Great Yuan court's ties to the Mongol empire's triumphant years. This chapter's retrospective tilt sheds light on how members of the Great Yuan court perceived things. Better understanding of the Great Yuan leads to better understanding of the Ming court.

Imperial collapse raised pressing questions. Who, for instance, deserved allegiance and why? Military prowess, generosity, personal charisma, good fortune, and heaven's support were all attributes of a worthy ruler in Turco-Mongolian political culture.[1] In the post-empire age, were Chinggisid men, Chinggisid sons-in-law, and those who professed to act on behalf of Chinggisids still the only ones fit to be rulers? Or, given the empire's implosion, had the Chinggisid principle grown irrelevant?[2] In fact, did one have to pledge

[1] Allsen, "Robing in the Mongolian Empire"; "Note on Mongol Imperial Ideology"; Fletcher, "Mongols"; Golden, "Ideology"; Mori, "T'u-chüeh."

[2] Wing (*Jalayirids*, p. 92) concludes, "Chinggisid ancestry was no longer seen as a prerequisite for legitimate rule."

allegiance to any sort of Mongol leader at all? Previously, during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, some Turkic groups viewed the emperor of the Tang dynasty as a worthy patron.[3] In the early seventeenth century, many Mongol leaders decided the ruler best able to restore order and protect their interests was not a Mongol but instead the Manchu leader Hong Taiji (1592–1643).[4] If majesty, good fortune, liberality, and awesome military power defined a legitimate ruler, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries wasn't the Great Ming emperor the most attractive lord available? For many Mongols in Central Asia, Tamerlane was the right choice. He lacked a Chinggisid pedigree but claimed status as a Chinggisid in-law, stressed his commitment to Mongol heritage, and highlighted his Muslim piety.[5] Alternatively, why pledge exclusive service to any one sovereign? Exploiting their strategic location along the eastern edge of the Mongolian steppe, the Three Guards leveraged their allegiance to extract economic and political advantage from Eastern Mongols, Chinggisid Great Khans, Oirats, and the Ming court during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[6]

In the early thirteenth century, the Mongols rose in the steppe, and in the late fourteenth century, a portion of them returned there. During the intervening century and half, the imperial experience transformed both Mongolia and the Mongols. When in 1368 the Great Yuan ruling house and its supporters relocated to the Mongolian steppe, they confronted the consequences of that transformation. How would Mongolia figure in the Great Yuan's future? What opportunities, limitations, and dangers did it present, both in the frantic weeks and months following Daidu's fall and in the long term? Relatedly, was the Great Yuan's restoration possible, even desirable? Would it entail steppe unity? Would it mean diminished freedom of choice among subordinate steppe populations? Would it require reconquering irredenta beyond the steppe such as Liaodong, Gansu, perhaps even China? What of the Mongol empire's even more distant parts in Central and West Asia? In the decades following Daidu's fall, these were all open questions. The answers varied widely according to time and individual circumstances.

The next three chapters examine the fate of the Great Yuan court and Great Yuan regional governance from the mid-fourteenth to early-fifteenth centuries. This chapter, "Daidu's Fall," is organized into three sections. The first section

[3] Skaff (*Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*) argues that high degrees of commensurability facilitated the formation of patrimonial patronage ties between the Tang ruling house and many contemporary Turkic groups.

[4] di Cosmo, "Nurhaci's Names"; "Nurhaci's Gambit." Elverskog (*Our Great Qing*) traces how Mongolian nobles came to perceive Manchu rule as essential for order and justice.

[5] Consider too Kasimov Tatars who took an oath to serve as vassals of the Muscovite grand prince in the sixteenth century. See Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 107–8.

[6] Yun, "14–15 segi Uryangkkai."

briefly reviews influential interpretations of the Chinggisids' status after 1368 and shifting perceptions about the legacy of Mongol empire. The second section discusses sources used to reconstruct this period of history on the Mongolian steppe and outlines some family dynamics among the "Chinggisids." The third section explores the period from Toghan-Temür's flight from Daidu to his death from illness on the steppe. The following chapter, "Changing Fortunes," traces the Great Yuan court's attempts at restoration under Toghan-Temür's immediate successors. Chapter 4 shifts focus from the Great Yuan court in eastern and central Mongolia to today's western Inner Mongolia and Gansu to consider Great Yuan regional governance after Daidu's fall.

Debate about the Great Yuan's Fate after 1368

One common interpretation holds that the Great Yuan ended in 1388, the year Toghus-Temür (1342–88), a son of Toghan-Temür (the last Mongol to rule from Daidu), was assassinated (see more shortly). In this view, his murder represents a clear dynastic rupture. Additionally, no evidence shows that later Mongol Great Khans used the name Great Yuan or emblems that show direct political descent from the Great Yuan. Cai Meibiao, a well-known historian of the Yuan period, argues, "after this point, the dynastic title Great Yuan was abandoned. The Sinitic style system of declaring titles vanished along with it."[7] Mongols continued to use Mongolian titles, but dynastic titles, reign titles, and temple names in the Sinitic script were abolished, argues Cai. He claims that after 1388, the term Great Yuan (Da Yuan) appears in neither Mongolian nor Sinophone materials.[8] Ming documents instead refer to the rulers of eastern Mongolia as "Tatar Princes" (*dada wangzi*). As supporting evidence, Cai refers to a Mongolian envoy to the Chosŏn (Korean) court in 1442 who called his lord the "Mongol Emperor" (*Menggu huangdi*) rather than "Great Yuan Emperor." Cai notes that seventeenth-century Mongolian chronicles use the expression "Mongolian Great Khans" but not Great Yuan rulers.[9]

A strong version of this interpretation would be that after Toghus-Temür's regicide in 1388, Mongols decisively refashioned their political identity, rejecting the Great Yuan but reaffirming Chinggis Khan in particular and the Chinggisid legacy in general. They stopped defining themselves in terms of the Yuan dynasty or Qubilai; in fact, some Mongols vehemently rejected any such association.[10] Such a transformation would have ended a century-long period

[7] Cai, "Mingdai Menggu," p. 45. Cao Yongnian ("Yexian yu 'Da Yuan'," p. 59) explicitly endorses Cai's position, but elsewhere (*Menggu minzu tongshi*, vol. 3, pp. 42–43) refers to Mongol polities of the next two centuries as an "extension of the Yuan dynasty."
[8] Cai, "Mingdai Menggu," p. 46. [9] Cai, "Mingdai Menggu," p. 46.
[10] Boyinhu, "Bei Yuan yu Mingdai Menggu."

when those two identities had coexisted. During the apogee of Mongol power, the polity ruled by Qubilai and his descendants went by several names. In the Sinophone world, it was most commonly called the Great Yuan (*Da Yuan*), the Great Yuan Dynasty (*Da Yuan Guo*), or Our Yuan (*Wo Yuan*). In the Mongolian language it was the Great Mongol Nation or Empire (*Yeke Mongghol Ulus*). Several steles from the 1330s to 1360s with both Chinese and Mongolian inscriptions give Great Yuan and Great Mongol Empire as equivalents or combine Great Yuan and Great Mongol Empire into a single term.[11] In fact, one leading scholar argues that Great Yuan referred not merely to the Yuan dynasty based in China but rather to the entire Mongol empire.[12]

Even after political unity on the Mongolian steppe deteriorated, Chinggisid nobles, especially direct descendants of Qubilai and Toghan-Temür, remained important. However, they increasingly became political figureheads, legitimating power held by ambitious men who ostensibly wielded power on their Chinggisid ruler's behalf.[13] In surviving Chinese and Korean sources of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, steppe leaders do not refer to themselves as descendants of the Great Yuan; in fact they rarely refer to the Great Yuan at all. Some see this as deliberate rejection of the Chinese-style Great Yuan dynasty. They maintain that many Mongols were happy to see the Great Yuan's demise. For Mongol traditionalists, according to this view, Qubilai's house represented a long and ultimately disastrous engagement with "Chinese ways."[14]

Other historians suggest that the lack of reference to the Great Yuan reflected not a deliberate break but rather a gradual accommodation to the new realities of the steppe, where Mongolian pride and Chinggisid charisma seemed more salient than the affectations of a foreign political culture. This interpretation holds that after 1388, Mongol leaders and their subordinate populations came to think of themselves as Mongols (*Monggholjin*) and their polity as the Mongol Empire (*Mongghol Ulus*). They privileged Chinggisid nobility as the natural political elite and valued the Chinggisid legacy as a unique time of glory and pride. In other words, Mongolian political elites considered affirmation or denunciation of Qubilai and the Great Yuan marginal to their story of the Mongol empire; they simply did not matter that much.

In sharp contrast, a second major line of interpretation holds that the Great Yuan lasted until 1634.[15] In this view, from the late fourteenth to early seventeenth centuries, the prestige and charisma of Chinggis Khan and the Great Yuan were mutually reinforcing – just as they had been during the Yuan

[11] Shidurghu, "Dada yu Da Yuan," p. 129. [12] Kim, "Mong'gol che'guk"; "Was Da Yuan."
[13] Wurina, "Shisi shijimo," pp. 59–60; Jin Xiao, "Bei Yuan kehan."
[14] Cai, "Mingdai Menggu," p. 46.
[15] Ullaan (Wulan), "Dayan yu 'Da Yuan'"; Shidurghu, "Dada yu Da Yuan."

dynasty. During this long period, Mongolian leaders and their followers both called themselves Mongols and identified with the Great Yuan.[16] Supporters of the "long Great Yuan" point out that until the seventeenth century, key Mongolian leaders referred to themselves as the Great Khan (*qaghan*) of the Yuan Great Empire (*Dayun yeke ulus*). Such examples include Toqto'a-Buqa in the 1440s, Esen in the early 1450s, Manduul in the 1470s, Batu-Möngke (better known by his title Great Khan Dayan) in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and Ligdan in the early seventeenth century.[17] Despite the lengthy documentary gaps of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, those who favor the "long Great Yuan" see such periodic declarations as evidence of continuous rather than intermittent identification with the Great Yuan.[18] In other words, Mongolian political culture's dynamics during these centuries may have shifted, but the Great Yuan remained integral to political identity and legitimacy.

Between these two ends of the spectrum, that is, a definitive end of the Great Yuan in 1388 and the uninterrupted survival of the Great Yuan until 1634, are several compromise approaches. Perhaps most influential has been the idea that after 1388, identification with the Great Yuan became an "ideology in reserve." When conditions on the steppe were right, rulers would evoke the Great Yuan to great effect. However, such evocations were not constant and for much of the period, Mongol Empire or Great Mongol Empire held greater appeal.[19]

Today, the most common way, especially in Anglophone scholarship, to denote the post-1368 Mongol court is "Northern Yuan."[20] The term Northern Yuan first appears in *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* (*Koryŏsa*). In the decades following Daidu's fall, the Koryŏ court (in Korea) developed the term to negotiate conflicting contemporary political demands. On the one hand, it was difficult suddenly to deny the existence of the Yuan court, with which the

[16] Dalizhabu, "Bei Yuanshi yanjiu."

[17] For the titles Dayan *qaghan* and Ligdan *qaghan* as they appear in Chinese and Mongolian sources, see Shidurghu, "Dada yu Da Yuan," pp. 124–27.

[18] Dai ("Guanyu Bei Yuanshi") highlights the continuity in royal house (*huang tong*), that is, the political identity of the ruling house, as a reason for understanding the period as the Northern Yuan.

[19] Hu, "Ming yu Bei Yuan"; Ullaan, "Dayan yu 'Da Yuan'," p. 12.

[20] In his *Encyclopedia*, Atwood uses Northern Yuan. The eighteenth-century Mongolian scholar Rashipuntsug favored the term Latter Yuan to show the continuity with the Yuan dynasty. In his chronicle, the *Crystal Rosary* (*Bolor Erike* circa 1774–75), Rashipuntsug described the period from Ayushiridara to Ligdan as the Latter Yuan Empire. See Morikawa, "Dai Gen," p. 76. In the 1606 Taihe Gate Sinophone stone inscription of the Maitreya Lamasery located in today's Right Tümed Banner, Baotou, Inner Mongolia, Altan Khan used Latter Yuan as his polity's title. For a black and white photograph and transcription, see Wang and Zhang, *Caoyuan jinshi*, pp. 188–89. For annotated translation of the inscription, see Serruys, "Notes on a Chinese Inscription."

Koryŏ court had deep political, military, and family ties (see more shortly). After all, such connections survived well after 1368 and were obvious to all observers. On the other hand, the Koryŏ court faced a dramatically altered geopolitical landscape. The Yuan court had lost control of nearly all its Chinese territory. Equally important, the Ming court claimed exclusive possession of the Mandate of Heaven and insisted that the Yuan dynasty no longer existed. To continue to call the Chinggisid court in the steppe the Great Yuan, as if nothing had changed, would have been a clear political statement.

A second consideration is that the final recension of *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* reflects the concerns and perspectives of the mid-fifteenth century, when the Chosŏn dynasty had long made peace with its alliance with the Ming dynasty. Given the paucity of extant materials, it is difficult to parse whether the term Northern Yuan in the *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* (and parallel works like the *Digest of The Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*) reflect late fourteenth or fifteenth century usage. Finally, the succeeding Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1897) did not use Northern Yuan to refer to contemporaneous Mongol polities. Instead, it generally followed Ming usage, using the term "Tatars."

Alternatives terms in recent scholarship such as "Ming-period Mongolia," "post-Mongol," and "post-imperial Mongol" pose problems. "Ming-period Mongolia" appears almost exclusively in Chinese language scholarship. Some scholars insist that it refers to Mongolia during the late fourteenth to early seventeenth centuries, that is, roughly analogous to the period of Ming rule, and does not connote Ming sovereignty over the Mongolian steppe. The term, however, facilitates conflation of China and Mongolia and feeds into PRC political discourse, which maintains that any region or group now within the PRC's borders has always been an integral part of China's fundamental, enduring unity. In fact, some Chinese scholars make exactly such a claim.[21] "Post-Mongol" suggests that after 1368 or 1388 Mongols did not exist or were no longer important. It also implies that inhabitants of the Mongolian steppe ceased to view themselves as Mongols. "Post-imperial Mongol" gets at the idea of Mongolia after the end of the Mongol empire but does not provide a clear end point; it might be interpreted as extending to the present.[22] Acknowledging that there is no tidy solution to the aforementioned issues, this book uses the terms the Yuan (and Great Yuan) court and dynasty, adding "post-1368" or "on the steppe" as needed for clarity.

[21] Hu, "Ming yu Bei Yuan," pp. 45, 47; Cao Yongnian, "Mingdai Menggushi bianzuanxue," pp. 68–69.
[22] Nagai, "Posuto teikokki," pp. 177–79.

Source Problems

No chronicles produced by the Great Yuan after 1368 survive today. We rely instead on four main bodies of historical evidence.[23] The first and most commonly used is the Ming corpus, that is, materials produced by the Ming court and Ming literati. The second major source, less systematically consulted, are Korean materials from the Koryŏ court and Koryŏ literati and after 1392, from the Chosŏn court and Chosŏn literati. The third body of surviving materials are contemporary autochthonous sources that reflect "the Mongolian" perspective. These include a small number of stele inscriptions, administrative seals, and bureaucratic documents produced by the Great Yuan after 1368. Finally, historians turn to Mongolian chronicles from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries to reconstruct developments of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.[24] Based on these diverse sources, scholars draw contradictory conclusions about contemporary Mongolian perceptions of the empire, the place of the Chinggisids, and the Great Yuan's status on the steppe.

The paucity of surviving sources complicates assessment of the Great Yuan's importance on the Mongolian steppe from the late fourteenth to early seventeenth centuries. The lack of explicit reference to the Great Yuan in contemporary Chinese and Korean sources may reflect the vagaries of historical survival rather than changing Mongol political culture and identity. One might compare the situation to the dissonance between many historical accounts, which hold that the Roman empire fell in the fifth century, and the Constantinople court, which until the fifteenth century considered itself the Roman empire's continuation. The relocation from Rome to Constantinople involved physical movement and important changes in the empire's scale and operation, but, in the Constantinople court's view, it produced no fundamental rupture.[25] Whereas a wealth of sources from the Constantinople court make possible the reconstruction of its self-identity and self-representation, we face an acute dearth of sources for the post-1368 Yuan court. As noted, we depend on accounts produced at the Chinese and Korean courts, Mongolian chronicles created centuries after the fact, and a handful of contemporary stele inscriptions, steles, and fragments of administrative documents.

The absence of Mongols' reference to the Great Yuan in Chinese and Korean materials does not prove that Mongols did not make such invocations. Silence after all does not prove absence. As noted previously and detailed in later chapters, the Ming court and to a lesser degree the Koryŏ and Chosŏn courts had a strong motive to efface any connection linking contemporary

[23] To the four categories to follow, one might add sources on the post-1368 Yuan court compiled during the Qing period. Far less used are Tibetan materials, which present their own challenges.
[24] Temul, "Bei Yuan shi jishuxing shiliao," pp. 170–73. [25] Kaldellis, *Republic*.

Mongol leaders and polities to the Great Yuan. The single most important Ming imperial history, the *Ming Veritable Records*, does not even mention that Ayushiridara (Toghan-Temür's son and the first Great Khan to take power in the post-1368 period) took a reign title, a standard feature of Chinese courts and used by the Great Yuan for nearly a century.[26] Such an omission was not accidental. The Ming court knew that Yuan envoys traveled to the Koryŏ court, Liaodong, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Hami, and many places along the Ming's northern border to announce new reign titles for Ayushiridara and his successor Toghus-Temür. For the Ming government to use their reign titles, however, would have been to acknowledge the Great Yuan's continuing political and ideological legitimacy. Thus, the absence of references to the Great Yuan in Ming and Koryŏ sources can be explained in several ways. It may reflect conscious decisions by contemporary Mongol leaders, gradual change in Mongol political culture, or deliberate choices by Ming and Koryŏ editors to pass silently over information incompatible with their governments' Chinggisid narratives.

The survival of Yuan period administrative titles on the steppe also poses questions. Well into the fifteenth century, Mongols used Yuan-period Chinese administrative and military titles. Some of these titles are linked to places beyond the control of the Great Yuan at that time, while others are only partial titles, for instance, "secretary" or "deputy," that do not indicate in what bureau or ministry the position was held. One might interpret the retention of Yuan-period titles as evidence of the Great Yuan court's survival or at least an attempt to exploit its lingering prestige to enhance individuals' social and political status on the steppe in the fifteenth century. In other words, it might have been an effort to turn the Chinggisid legacy to one's advantage. Yet, such titles gradually grew into names. This is analogous to professions that became surnames like Carpenter, Baker, and Smith in England or titles like Amir and Khan that became names in Arabic-, Urdu-, and Persian-speaking parts of the world.[27] Thus, social aspirations may have been unrelated to memory of the Mongol empire.

To overcome the challenging scarcity of Mongolian written sources from the late fourteenth century to late sixteenth century,[28] scholars today sift

[26] Fang, "Guanyu Beiyuan," p. 59. *Official History of the Ming Dynasty* similarly omits mention of this. In contrast, *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* refers explicitly to the reign title of both Ayushiridara and his successor, Toghus-Temür. See *KS*, 133.10.4005; *KSCY*, 30.25a, p. 761; *KS*, 134.10.4027; *KSCY*, 31.6b, p. 774. Ayushiridara's reign title is first mentioned in an entry from 1377, when the Koryŏ court briefly adopted its use.

[27] Serruys, *Mongols in China*, appendix three, pp. 286–89.

[28] As a result, discussions of Mongolian history and culture often skip lightly over these centuries, moving from the Mongol empire's glories to the "rebirth of Mongolian culture" in the sixteenth and more especially the seventeenth centuries. Using such language, György Kara (*Books of the Mongolian Nomads*, p. 69) covers the late fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries in a single paragraph.

Mongolian chronicles compiled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[29] Some argue that these later Mongolian chronicles grew out of oral traditions. Thus, one Mongolian historian concludes, "it is entirely possible to determine the historical knowledge of Mongols in the fifteenth century."[30] Others acknowledge such materials' limitations but insist that they accurately record major political events of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[31] In sharp contrast, Elverskog argues that the Mongols' integration into the Qing empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries deeply influenced the way they understood and recounted the past. The depiction of Chinggis' importance as a source of political legitimacy and the relation of individual clans to Chinggis and Chinggisid descendants in seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century Mongolian chronicles differ significantly from the few surviving pre-Qing works such as the *Jewel Translucent Sutra*.[32] Surviving seventeenth century chronicles rarely refer to the Great Yuan, even during its apex under Qubilai. In contrast, eighteenth-century Mongolian accounts show much clearer awareness of the Great Yuan. One specialist explains this change as a result of Mongolian historians' growing access to Chinese historical works like *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*, which ushered in a major shift in historical consciousness.[33] Thus, there are no easy solutions to the documentary famine from the late fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries, and it seems imprudent to assume an unchanging monolithic Mongolian memory of the Chinggisid empire and the Great Yuan.

[29] Okada, "Mongol Chronicles"; "Analysis of the Lament"; "Eshū hika no genryū."

[30] In his introduction, Bira (*Mongolian Historical Writing*, p. XX) stresses the "uninterrupted continuity of Mongolian chronicle-writing," noting that later Mongolian chronicles retain much information taken from sources of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

[31] Temul, "Bei Yuan shi jishuxing shiliao," pp. 169–70. He draws on Shidurghu's assessment of the Mongolian chronicles. Temul and Shidurghu stress Mongolian chronicles' invaluable worth, but they leave ambiguous whether the chronicles are important primarily for reconstructing the fourteenth and fifteenth century or for seventeenth and eighteenth century understandings of earlier periods. Elsewhere, Shidurghu ("Lun shiqi shiji Menggu shijia") stresses that seventeenth-century Mongolian chroniclers hewed closely to the Chinggisid principle. Such chronicles recast Great Khans of the Ögödeid and Ariq-Böke lines as Qubilai's descendants or omit non-Qubilaids' names.

[32] Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, pp. 79–89, 99–101. Elverskog (*Our Great Qing*, p. 79) notes that by the late eighteenth century, "the Manchu emperor was not only a Heavenly-blessed Cakravartin, but had in fact become a Chinggisid khan." Chinggis khan's incorporation into Buddhist rituals during the eighteenth century also undermined his status (pp. 114–16). İsenbıke Togan ("Qongirat," pp. 79–80) notes, "The unification and centralization in the 19th century produced a unified and centralized past." Chinggis khan's adversaries were recast as his allies. See also Elverskog, "Legend of Muna Mountain"; Atwood, "Historiography and Transformation."

[33] Morikawa, "Dai Gen." Morikawa (p. 74) also notes the impact of Tibetan historical accounts that accompanied the resurgence of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols.

The Chinggisid Family

To this point, I have used Chinggisid in an unproblematic, aggregate sense, but the term covers a host of sins. In accord with Chinggis Khan's wishes, his son Ögödei (r. 1229–41) succeeded as the supreme ruler of the Mongols and their growing empire.[34] Despite some bumps, rulership remained within the House of Ögödei for the next several decades. In 1251 a dramatic change transformed power holding within the Chinggisid family. The House of Tolui (1192–1232), the youngest of Chinggis' sons, seized supreme control. The Houses of Ögödei and Chaghatai (1183–1242), another of Chinggis' sons, suffered brutal purges at the hands of the new Toluid ruler, Möngke (r. 1209–59).[35] They, however, remained enduring features of Eurasia's political landscape. House identity did not preclude alliances with the imperial family's other branches, but on occasion it provided justification for resistance, even open revolt, against the Toluid House. During the 1270s and 1280s, Chinggisid nobles such as Qaidu, Qadan, and Nayan defied Qubilai's authority. They explained their decision partly in terms of house allegiance, just as another Chinggisid noble, Alqui-Temür, did in the 1360s.[36]

In the same way, divisions rived the Toluid House itself. When Möngke died in 1259, two of his younger brothers fought for control of the house: Qubilai (1215–94) and Ariq-Böke (d. 1266). Both held strong claims to the position of Great Khan, but Qubilai prevailed and founded the Yuan dynasty. Chronicles from the Yuan dynasty and its West Asian ally, the Ilkhanate, usually cast Qubilai as the rightful successor and Ariq-Böke as a scheming rebel.[37] A residual sense of resentment and betrayal may have persisted as an element of house identity, but Ariq-Böke's descendants did not consistently war against the Qubilaid rulers of the Great Yuan, which would have prompted severe military reprisal.[38]

Thus, as was true in any large ruling family, the Chinggisids held a strong sense of corporate identity as members of an important and heaven-favored dynasty, but distinctions persisted among individual branches of the wider family. We might think here of the early modern European aristocracy, but spread over an even greater span of territory and stretched by greater diversity

[34] Also transcribed as Öködei.

[35] Allsen, *Mongolian Imperialism*; Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, pp. 71–90.

[36] Biran, *Qaidu*; Zhou and Gu, *Yuanshi*, p. 318; Horie, "Nayan"; Yao, "Naiyuan zhi luan"; Li, "Make Boluo suoji"; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 38, 96–97.

[37] Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, pp. 47–62; Sugiyama, *Dai Mongoru no sekai*, pp. 184–89; *Mongoru teikoku to Dai Gen*, pp. 105–20.

[38] Baoyin ("Guanyu Yesudieer," pp. 7–9) reviews Ariq-Böke's descendants' service on behalf of Yuan rulers. The acute and often violent conflict among Hülegüid princes (discussed in Brack, "Mediating Sacred Kingship," pp. 55–68) throws into relief the relative lack of open conflict between descendants of Qubilai and Ariq-Böke.

of local traditions (Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, steppe environments and lifeways vs. those of sedentary region, etc.). The aforementioned account has hewn to the ruling houses of the Chinggisid family, but similar questions of allegiance and enmity, of historical memory and shifting conditions also confronted scores of allied lineages and communities within the Mongol empire.

So what happened to memory of the Mongol empire after the golden age's end and Toghan-Temür relocated his court to the southern steppe in 1368? How did Mongols think about the Chinggisid, Toluid, and Great Yuan legacies?[39] Here we confront several difficulties, including contested narratives, fragmentary documentary and material sources, and historical overwriting. As Chapter 5 shows, the early Ming court insisted that 1368 was a moment of clear rupture – the irreversible end of the Yuan dynasty, Mongol claims to the territory and people of China, and Toghan-Temür's standing as emperor and Son of Heaven. The Ming court's depiction of 1368 as deeply transformative was one facet of its carefully orchestrated Chinggisid narrative that we can reconstruct in some detail because of the large number of surviving textual materials issued by the Ming court and sympathetic Chinese literati.

A Political Narrative of the Great Yuan Court: 1368–1398

In the decades following Toghan-Temür's withdrawal to the steppe, the Great Yuan had one center and several powerful allies, usually located at a considerable physical remove. At the center was the Great Khan's court. It included close Chinggisid family members, senior officials, and military commanders, with their own family and supporters. In total, the center numbered between several thousand and several tens of thousands of people, depending on circumstances. As later chapters show, powerful allies, such as Naghachu, Köke-Temür, and Vajravarmi, also oversaw large populations and territories. The relationship between such allies and the Great Yuan court varied, and the paucity of sources makes a detailed reconstruction of the dynamics of such relations difficult. Naghachu, Köke-Temür, and Vajravarmi were allies in that they supplied military support, accepted Great Yuan titles, and used the Great Yuan calendar. It may be tempting to dismiss the latter two as empty gestures, but contemporaries understood them as important statements of political allegiance. Zhu Yuanzhang and his senior advisors consistently described Naghachu, Köke-Temür, Vajravarmi and others as the Great Yuan ruler's ministers, thus highlighting issues of allegiance and devotion to lord.

[39] Morikawa, "Dai Gen."

An integral facet of such loyalty to the Great Yuan was rejection of the Great Ming. Pledges of allegiance mattered.

The following narrative focuses on the Great Khan's central court circa 1368–98. Later chapters turn to the Great Yuan's principal supporters, such as Köke-Temür, Naghachu, and Vajravarmi, as well as lesser allies, including smaller kingdoms such as Hami and Shazhou (located in today's eastern Xinjiang Autonomous Region and western Gansu Province, respectively). The Great Yuan's political history during these decades is intricately tied to that of the Great Ming court. Shifts in the Great Yuan's strength and status often hinged on military clashes with the Ming dynasty. Since understanding of steppe history for this period relies so heavily on sources produced at the Ming court and to a lesser degree the Koryŏ court, it is easy to overstate Ming impact at the expense of internal developments within the Mongolian elite. Fortunately, we are not totally dependent on Ming sources.

Darkest Hour

The sole surviving insider account of the Great Yuan court from 1368 to 1370 in any language is *A Personal Account of the Northern Tour*, a memoir written in classical Chinese by Liu Ji, a Chinese official in the service of Toghan-Temür. Liu Ji recalls that on September 10, 1368, the emperor summoned his ministers to Qingning Palace in Daidu, where he announced that he was leaving for Shangdu. "Everyone," Liu Ji recounts, "held his breath without saying a word." A single minister dissented. He observed that Zhu Yuanzhang's forces had already seized the nearby city of Tongzhou. If the emperor were to leave, the official argued, Daidu would be indefensible. He invoked the example of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 1213–24) of the Jin dynasty, who withdrew from the Jurchen's main capital at today's Beijing and reestablished his court in Kaifeng.[40] The Jurchens never regained the territory. Thus, this official insisted, the emperor must hold out until reinforcements arrived. Toghan-Temür responded wearily, "Yesü (one of his key generals) has already been defeated, and Köke-Temür is far away in Taiyuan. What reinforcements are we to await?"[41]

Toghan-Temür did not make his decision lightly. In 1271, his forefather, Qubilai, had named Daidu as a capital. Strategically located, it bridged the steppe and the sown. By no later than 1300, it had become the Great Yuan's predominant political center. As the Great Khan's residence for much of the year, it housed the prestigious imperial guard (*keshig*), a key institution for forging bonds of allegiance among Mongolian, Turkic, Jurchen, Tibetan, and

[40] The Jurchen capital at today's Beijing was called Zhongdu (Middle Capital). [41] *BXSJ*, p. 2.

other members of the pan-Eurasian elite.[42] Daidu was also the site of generous artistic, religious, and scholarly patronage, through which the Yuan court simultaneously displayed its wealth and power and cultivated support from both elites and commoners at home and in allied regimes.[43]

When the Yuan court's control over its expansive territory withered in the 1350s and 1360s, Daidu's significance for the Great Yuan ruling elite only grew. It became a bastion of security, a port of safety and authority in a roiling sea of chaos. From there, the court hoped to restore order and revive dynastic fortunes.[44] However, in 1364, even Daidu seemed ready to implode under the pressure of intensifying court intrigue. Bolad-Temür, a Mongol noble and father-in-law to the reigning emperor Toghan-Temür, marched his powerful army to the capital, put Empress Ki (Toghan-Temür's second and at this point more favored wife) under house arrest, and drove the Heir-Apparent (Empress Ki's son) out of the city. Dramatic change continued. In less than a year, Bolad-Temür had been assassinated, Empress Ki released, and the heir apparent restored. Stability, however, proved fleeting.[45] Zhu Yuanzhang's rebel forces drove northward, crossed the Yellow River, and occupied strategic cities in the northern province of Shandong. By early September 1368, they were marching on the capital's gates.

Given Daidu's storied history, in time Toghan-Temür's departure assumed great significance for both Chinese and Mongolian observers, variously inspiring tales of tragic loss, regret, revival, and redemption.[46] According to Liu Ji, the emperor left the capital with an entourage of just 100 people, including his empress and consorts, the heir apparent, the heir apparent's sons, and a dozen or so senior officials.[47] He ordered a Mongol noble to remain behind to defend the capital against the approaching Ming army.[48] The next day Toghan-Temür and his entourage reached Juyong Pass, some thirty miles (about 50 km) north of Daidu. The Yuan court had constructed Juyong Pass at great expense in the 1340s as a way to celebrate universal Mongol rule and highlight links between the glorious Qubilai and Toghan-Temür, then just a child ruler.[49] For more than two decades between 1334 and 1358, Toghan-Temür and his court had passed each year through Juyong Pass during their annual progress to the

[42] On the *keshig*'s role in elite-formation, see Allsen, "Guard and Government"; Morihira, "Genchō keshike"; Grupper, "A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," pp. 38–72.
[43] McCausland, *Mongol Century*, pp. 23–51; Weidner, "Aspects of Painting and Patronage"; Weitz, "Art and Politics."
[44] Chen Gaohua, "Shuo Yuanmo Hongjinjun," pp. 24–25; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 86–94.
[45] Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 244–48.
[46] Okada, "Analysis of the Lament"; "Kaishū hika no genryū."
[47] *BXSJ*, p. 2.
[48] *BXSJ*, p. 3. Seventeenth-century Mongolian chronicles mention the glorious stand of Qaji Külüg, a descendant of "alert shooter Qasar." See Bawden, *Mongol Chronicle*, p. 151. He held the title of Prince of Huai.
[49] For Juyong Pass, see Murata, *Kyoyōkan*; Su Bai, "Juyongguan guojieta"; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 20–21.

steppe, an architectural display of wealth and power. Now the pass was deserted. "There was not a single soldier at the pass," wrote Liu Ji, "When the emperor arrived, no food was provided." The emperor observed, "If I had not left the capital, how would I have known matters beyond Daidu were so?"[50]

They traveled first to Middle Capital (Zhongdu in today's Zhangbei County, Hebei Province), and then on September 27, they reached Shangdu, which too was a shadow of its former glory. Liu Ji wrote, "The Red Turban rebels have torched and pillaged Shangdu. Both government and private buildings have been completely destroyed. The imperial palace and government offices have all been destroyed through fire. A handful of commoner residences survive."[51] For the next nine months, Shangdu was the Yuan emperor's home.

For Liu Ji, the court's new refuge was bleak. He records that partisan fighting and old vendettas persisted amidst the crisis. Key commanders were regularly drunk. Other officials preferred solace in the arms of their Korean consorts to taxing deliberations of state. The emperor was often ill and unable to meet with his ministers. Liu Ji records inauspicious omens like foxes that appear in the emperor's residence; "they proceeded straight at the emperor's throne," he observes.[52] Reports reached the court with depressing regularity that Ming armies had either defeated Yuan forces or were marching northward into the steppe. No less painful was news that key commanders had forsaken the Great Yuan to join the upstart Zhu Yuanzhang. Finally, the Koryŏ royal house, bound by a century of marriage and strategic interests to the House of Qubilai, not only ignored requests for military assistance but also pursued diplomatic relations with the Ming court.

By July 1369, Shangdu and its charred buildings were untenable as a base. Toghan-Temür's officials urged him to relocate to Qara-Qorum, the site of the Mongols' first capital of the empire (near today's Kharkhorin, central Mongolia). There, they felt, the court would be safe from Ming attack. The emperor disagreed, but he understood that Shangdu was no longer safe. After slogging through punishing rains and high winds, on July 23, 1369, Toghan-Temür and his court reached Yingchang (**see Map 2.1**). Yingchang is located some sixty miles (about 95 km) due north of Shangdu on the western bank of Lake Dalai (M. Dalai Na'ur, Ch. Dalihu, near today's Chifeng, Inner Mongolia), the largest freshwater lake in Inner Mongolia. Yingchang had escaped damage from the Red Turban wars.[53] There the Great Yuan court spent a miserable winter. Four days after Toghan-Temür evacuated Shangdu, Ming armies occupied it. Pressure mounted to move to Qara-Qorum. The last entry of Liu Ji's memoir is dated February 7, 1370. Toghan-Temür never agreed to move.

[50] *BXSJ*, p. 2. [51] *BXSJ*, p. 3. [52] *BXSJ*, pp. 4–5. [53] *BXSJ*, p. 6.

Map 2.1 Distances from Daidu

On May 23, 1370 he died of dysentery in Yingchang, thus forever escaping Zhu Yuanzhang, whose armies were rapidly closing in on his court.

Liu Ji's bleak memoir suggests that the Great Yuan court was adrift and in terminal disarray. Yet the Ming court and Mongol nobles on the steppe were right to view Toghan-Temür and his court as a threat. The Great Yuan court retained a surprisingly long reach. Toghan-Temür may have left Daidu with a small entourage, but many more people joined him in Shangdu and Yingchang. These included not just Mongols but sizeable numbers of Central Asians, Jurchens, Kitans, and perhaps most notably Chinese.[54] The court maintained formal administrative structures of government, including both the civil bureaucracy and military. Liu Ji consistently refers to individuals in his account by their official titles such as Minister of the Left, Bureau Manager of the Bureau of Military Affairs, and Minister of the Left of the Secretariat. Equally critical was the steady stream of provincial officials who either traveled in person or sent representatives to Toghan-Temür's court. The majority hailed from Liaoyang Branch Secretariat. Throughout the entire period covered by Liu Ji's memoir, the emperor and his court continued to make administrative appointments in both the central government and the provinces. One might discount such posts as empty gestures to secure the continued loyalty of the throne's servants. However, the continued appeal of such promotions suggests that the court's authority and prestige still mattered.

As later chapters show, contemporary Ming writers often depict Toghan-Temür's flight from Daidu as a transformative moment. By abandoning the physical space of the Central Plains, the Ming court argued, Toghan-Temür forfeited his status as emperor. The Great Yuan, in this view, ceased to exist as a dynasty; its surviving members reverted to a ragged steppe band. Ming writers sought to convey this irreversible change by portraying Toghan-Temür and his fellow "remnant bastards" as aimlessly adrift in the steppe's forbidding desolation. In fact, the Great Yuan court did not immediately withdraw deeply into the steppe, where it would have been outside the reach of Ming armies.

The Great Yuan court instead relocated to centers of imperial charisma based in large walled settlements.[55] As noted, Toghan-Temür's court first sojourned at Middle Capital. In 1307, almost immediately after taking the throne, the ostensibly steppe-oriented emperor Khaishan (Emperor Wuzong,

[54] Yu Ben (*JSLJZ*, p. 267) notes "Uyghur" carts and people among the retreating Great Yuan forces at Xinhua Route. Shortly later (p. 269), he records that when an uprising by a contingent of "Uyghur" soldiers was discovered in Tongzhou, Ming troops killed more than 5,000 of them. The Uyghur soldiers' wives were then distributed among Ming military personnel. Here and elsewhere, Yu Ben seems to use "Uyghur" and Tatar interchangeably to refer to Mongols. On Yu Ben's memoir, see Dreyer, "Chi-Shih-Lu of Yü Pen"; Li Xinfeng, "Zailun Mingchu"; *JSLJZ*, pp. 1–39.

[55] Steinhardt ("Imperial Architecture") argues that city building on the steppe was integral to the Mongol empire.

r. 1307–11) constructed a capital city. The Middle Capital never achieved Shangdu or Daidu's political prominence, but Khaishan envisioned it as a true imperial capital, with three sets of walls for the outer city, the imperial city, and the palace complex.[56] He mobilized tens of thousands of men to build the palace buildings and transport enormous amounts of soil needed for the city's tamped-earth outer walls.[57] The circumference of the city walls measures nearly 12,000 meters, and the palace complex is approximately 930 meters east to west and 770 meters north to south.[58] Perched on the broad mounds of packed earth and bricked faces of the palace walls' four corners, wooden towers, painted and decorated with glazed roof tiles, protected the palace buildings.[59]

Scholars debate Khaishan's motivations. Some argue that by emulating Qubilai's example of founding a capital on the steppe, Khaishan planned to bolster his authority in the Mongolian world.[60] Others hold that Khaishan intended to commemorate Chinggis Khan's defeat of the Jin dynasty early in the thirteenth century, in part to celebrate his own military exploits.[61] Others, stressing Khaisan's strong steppe-orientation, suggest that he envisioned Middle Capital as a strategic hinge between Daidu and Shangdu that would permit control of steppe and sown.[62] Although interpretations vary in their emphasis, they agree that Middle Capital's founding grew from both strategic military concerns about control over steppe and sown and an intense concern with dynastic legacy and prestige. Khaishan's short reign and death in 1311 precluded full realization of whatever goals he may have held. Instead, his successor, Ayurbarwada (Emperor Renzong, r. 1312–20), quickly abolished many of Khaishan's policies, including Middle Capital.[63]

Nonetheless, Middle Capital retained lasting significance for the Yuan imperial house. During the 1320s, Yisün-Temür (Emperor Taiding,

[56] Zhang Chunchang, "Youguan Yuan Zhongdu," pp. 32–33.
[57] Chen Gaohua, "Yuan Zhongdu," p. 17.
[58] Hebeisheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Yuan Zhongdu*, vol. 1, pp. 47 and 39 for city and palace complex walls, respectively.
[59] Hebeisheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Yuan Zhongdu*, vol. 1, pp. 78–102. See figures 37–39 (pp. 94, 96–97) for lateral view diagrams of the palace's southwestern tower. See pp. 102–40 for roof tiles and decorations excavated at the southwest tower site.
[60] Chen Gaohua, "Yuan Zhongdu," p. 20. For schematic diagrams of the layout of Qara-Qorom, Shangdu, Daidu, and Middle Capital, see Zhang Chunchang, "Yuan Zhongdu yu Helin, Shangdu, Dadu," p. 9. Zhang ("Youguan Yuan Zhongdu," p. 33–35) highlights the emulation of Daidu's walls, towers, and several other features in Middle Capital's construction.
[61] Zhou Liangxia, "Sanchao xiagong," p. 23; Han Zhiyuan, "Lüelun Jin Fuzhou," p. 28; Meng Fanqing, "Manyi Yuan Zhongdu," p. 35.
[62] Ye Xinmin et al., "Yuandai de Xinghelu," p. 32. They also suggest that the area's cool temperatures and bountiful game appealed to Khaishan. Meng Fanqing ("Manyi Yuan Zhongdu," p. 35) proposes that Khaishan saw Middle Capital as a way to protect Shangdu by linking it to Daidu's economic, military, and political resources.
[63] Ye Xinmin et al., "Yuandai de Xinghelu," pp. 32–33.

r. 1323–28) visited Middle Capital's palace complex, usually on hunting expeditions or to supervise Buddhist ceremonies. In 1329, the reigning emperor, Qoshila (Emperor Mingzong, r. 1329), was poisoned to death during a banquet at Middle Capital by his brother, Tuq-Temür (Emperor Wenzong. r, 1328–29, 1329–32), who then took the throne.[64] Qoshila was Toghan-Temür's father and Tuq-Temür his uncle. Thereafter, Tuq-Temür avoided Middle Capital, in part perhaps because of the traumatic memory of murdering his brother.[65] The palace complex and unfinished city seem to have fallen into decline. In 1354, Toghan-Temür passed through Middle Capital on a return trip from Shangdu to Daidu. An accompanying minister wrote in his travelogue, the city "is now largely abandoned. Emperors have long since stopped visiting."[66]

Yet, we should not be too quick to consign Middle Capital to oblivion.[67] In 1410, Zhu Di passed through the site en route to his first campaign on the Mongol steppe as Ming emperor. He pointed out to his civil officials that the city was the location of Middle Capital. He also held forth about the region's distinctive features, such as its excellent pasture lands. In 1414, on yet another steppe campaign, Zhu Di conducted a military review on the site.[68] Thus, Middle Capital's memory as an imperial capital and site of special significance persisted for more than a century after its abolition as a Yuan capital.

When he arrived in Middle Capital in mid-September 1368, Toghan-Temür likely had mixed feelings. He was aware that his father, Qoshila, had perished on the site at the hands of his uncle in a deadly fratricidal struggle four decades earlier.[69] He also knew that his forefathers had created, patronized, and sometimes shunned the site. Having lost Daidu and urgently needing a defensible refuge, he perhaps viewed the rundown palace complex with some familiarity and the city's walls with a measure of relief. Whatever his emotions, Toghan-Temür's stay at Middle Capital lasted less than a week.

Shangdu was the next imperial city where Toghan-Temür's court sought safety. Although damaged by fighting, Shangdu had been Qubilai's first

[64] Chen Gaohua, "Yuan Zhongdu," p. 19; Ye Xinmin et al., "Yuandai de Xinghelu," p. 33.

[65] In 1328, Tuq-Temür did send a Tibetan monk to conduct an unspecified rite at Middle Capital. See *YS,* 32.3.713. Cited in Zhou Liangxia, "Sanchao xiagong," p. 23.

[66] Zhou Boqi, *Jin guang ji* (*WYSK*, 1214.546). Cited in Chen Gaohua, "Yuan Zhongdu," p. 19; Zheng Shaozong, "Kaoguxueshang suojian," p. 55).

[67] Zhou Boqi notes in the same postface (*WYSK*, 1214.545) that "the city walls are complete and whole; the markets are crowded." Meng Fanqing ("Manyi Yuan Zhongdu," p. 36) takes this as a description of Middle Capital in 1352 (Chen Gaohua dates the trip to 1354, although Zhou Boqi's preface clearly notes that the trip took place in Zhengzhi 12, that is, 1352).

[68] Jin Youzi, *Bei zheng lu* (*GCDG*, 16.1.299) and *Bei zheng hou lu* (*GCDG*, 17.1.317), respectively. Cited in Chen Gaohua, "Yuan Zhongdu," p. 19; Ye Xinmin et al., "Yuandai de Xinghelu," p. 33.

[69] Toghan-Temür (or his advisors) noted Tuq-Temür's role in Qoshila's death in a 1340 edict. See Ye Xinmin et al., "Yuandai de Xinghelu," p. 33.

capital. Until recently, it had housed the imperial court for several months each year. In fact, Shangdu was Toghan-Temür's second home. In 1333 when still a boy, he had been enthroned there as Great Khan. Each year between 1334 and 1358, he had spent several summer and early autumn months there.[70] After Shangdu sustained substantial damage late in 1358, Toghan-Temür ceased his annual trip. In 1363 and again in 1365, Daidu's political infighting spilled over into pitched battles for mastery of Shangdu. They involved large cavalry forces and contingents of soldiers armed with firearms. In addition, in 1360 and 1363, imperial armies clashed with rebel armies at Shangdu.[71] All this shows that during the mid-1360s, Shangdu remained an important military and political node in the Yuan imperium. It was sufficiently important to risk lives and treasure in the struggle for its control. When Toghan-Temür arrived in Shangdu after a decade's absence, he was no doubt struck by the changes destruction had wrought upon the city. It was, however, the site where he had become Great Khan and Qubilai's first capital, a place of considerable political prestige and undiminished strategic significance. For nearly ten months, Toghan-Temür stayed at Shangdu.

His court there was far from isolated. It engaged in regular diplomatic activities. The Great Khan received delegations from the Koryŏ court, which sent formal messages of New Year felicitations and expressions of loyalty and support for a restoration.[72] In return, Toghan-Temür dispatched senior officials to bestow clothing and wine on King Kongmin.[73]

Yingchang is approximately ninety-five miles (150 km) north of Shangdu, just south of Lake Dalai and located on a critical transportation route linking Qara-Qorum to the productive farmlands of China. In fact, Juyong Pass, Middle Capital, Shangdu, and Yingchang were all located on imperial highways that connected Daidu to Qara-Qorum. Yingchang was established in 1270 by an important ally of Qubilai, the Ongirat noble Oroǰin.[74] Thought to be modeled in part on Shangdu's spatial layout, Yingchang included a cluster of Buddhist monasteries in its northern half and a Confucian academy within the southern outer walls. The remains of Yingchang's outer walls measure 650 meters east to west and 800 meters north to south. The walls measure ten meters at their base and taper to two meters at the top; they were between three

[70] Ye Xinmin, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 340–42. [71] Ye Xinmin, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 211–12.
[72] *KS*, 41.3.1283–84. [73] *KS*, 41.3.1284.
[74] For schematic maps based on archeological findings, see Zhang Wenping, "Neimenggu diqu Meng Yuan chengzhen," p. 553; Liu Zhiyi, "Yuan Yingchanglu," p. 114. Cleaves ("Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1338," p. 16) translates the passage in *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* where Qubilai approved the petition of Oroǰin and his consort Nagghiyaǰin for use of this territory as their summer encampment. Their petition explicitly stated, "we may establish there a city and thereby reside [there]" (p. 16). Transcription of Oroǰin follows, Hambis, *Le chapitre CVIII*, table 2.

and five meters in height. An east-west boulevard fifteen meters in width ran through Yingchang; on either side were market shops. Scholars believe that the city also housed a craftsmen's quarter. In the settlement's center was a walled, inner complex with a large hall for Ongirat nobles' use.[75]

Yingchang was closely associated with the ruling House of Qubilai and his descendants. For generations, Ongirat noble women married into the Qubilaid family. Qubilaid princesses married Ongirat noble men, who as a consequence were royal sons-in-law.[76] Being a royal son-in-law both conferred high status and imposed military burdens (including mobilizing local men as warriors on behalf of the Chinggisid imperial house). Such service in turn provided opportunities to win further rewards of land, titles, and other gifts.[77] At Yingchang, Ongirat royal sons-in-law maintained their own administration, which was a common prerogative for Mongol nobles throughout Yuan territories. As was true elsewhere, Yingchang's princely administration was counterbalanced by a bureaucratic structure administered from the capital.[78] Tile shards excavated at Yingchang serve as a tangible reminder of the links between Yingchang and the Qubilaid House, between the steppe and the capital. The shards are inscribed with the characters "imperial palace" 內府. The porcelain was almost certainly a gift from the Yuan throne.[79]

More explicit articulations of Yingchang's ties to the Yuan ruling house survive even today. In 1325, Qubilai's great-granddaughter (the daughter of Temür, Emperor Chengzong, r. 1295–1307) erected a stele commemorating the repair of Dragon Rising Monastery (Longxingsi) in nearby Mt. Mantuo (Mt. Manda[la]). The stele account relates that in 1287, Qubilai had encamped at Yingchang en route to suppress the rebellion of the Mongol noble Nayan. During the night a golden Buddha revealed itself, inspiring Qubilai to construct a monastery.[80] By trumpeting Qubilai's military prowess, his great-granddaughter reminded locals of her connection to Qubilai and the imperial family more generally. Toghan-Temür's mother was not an Ongirat, but Ongirat nobles had a strong corporate interest in protecting the Great Yuan ruling house.

[75] Liu Zhiyi, "Yuan Yingchanglu," p. 113; Li Yiyou, "Yuan Yingchanglu gucheng."

[76] Zhao, *Marriage*, pp. 102–8 and tables 3 and 4, pp. 112–16. Ongirat service on behalf of the Chinggisids dated back to the early thirteenth century when they received lands near today's Chifeng. In 1238, O[t]ǰin married a daughter of the eminent Muqali and received the position of myriarch. He built a residence (or "detached palace") along the eastern bank of Dalai Lake. See Shen Wanli, "Yuandai Yingchang" p. 29.

[77] Ongirat sons-in-law held the Chinese title Prince of Lu, which was first conferred by Khaishan (Emperor Wuzong) in 1307. See Shen, "Yuandai Yingchang," p. 30.

[78] Dai Xiyan, "Menggu Hongjilabu."

[79] Liu Zhiyi, "Yuan Yingchanglu," p. 115.

[80] "Yingchanglu Mantuoshan xinjian Longxingsi ji," in Wang and Zhang, *Caoyuan jinshi*, pp. 91–92.

Thus, Toghan-Temür and his court had abandoned the Great Yuan's primary capital, Daidu, in great haste. But they had then withdrawn step-by-step to Chinggisid capitals or, in the case of Yingchang, a sizeable and affluent walled settlement held by the imperial throne's proven ally. They traveled along well-established routes that Yuan emperors and their courts had used for nearly a century. They did not wander aimlessly or hole up in unnamed, desolate spots on the steppe as Liu Ji, suddenly bereft of Daidu's glories, may have genuinely felt, and many later Ming court accounts disingenuously suggested. Advisors at the Great Yuan court consistently argued that Qara-Qorum, another imperial urban center, was the logical site to prepare for the restoration. Further, the Great Yuan administered a number of walled settlements within what had become a contested borderland. As this and later chapters show, well after 1368, the Great Yuan retained an underappreciated urban dimension. The Chinggisid imperial enterprise of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had transformed Mongolian political culture in ways that continued to shape events after 1368.

The decision to stay relatively close to Ming territory owes something to the Yuan court's wish to recover Daidu and territories to the south. In addition, Toghan-Temür and the House of Qubilai faced a potentially hostile reception deeper on the steppe. Nobles from the houses of Ögödei, Chaghadai, and Ariq-Böke had remained within the steppe, ostensibly committed to "traditional" Mongol lifeways. One version of events holds that these aristocrats viewed Toghan-Temür through the prism of house allegiance; he was a descendant and successor to Qubilai, who had betrayed Chinggis' legacy by adopting outlandish "Chinese methods."[81] Thus, such a view holds, they must have viewed him with suspicion and hostility. Just as likely, Chinggisid nobles on the steppe considered the Yuan emperor a dangerous rival who threatened their authority and power. Toghan-Temür and his immediate successor probably also perceived Mongol nobles, for instance, the Northwest Princes, as likely to be enemies as allies.[82]

Toghan-Temür's presence almost certainly altered political calculations on the steppe. After all, he remained a Great Khan traveling with a large and wealthy camp that included military personnel and a cosmopolitan staff of civil officials. Further, the Great Yuan claimed powerful commanders' allegiance and a fully articulated administrative structure that spanned the southern

[81] Wada ("Mindai no Mōko to Manshū," pp. 304–7) was among the first to articulate this view. The assumption of widespread, open hostility between traditionalist nobles (e.g., Ariq-Böke) and Qubilai with his Chinese methods, is as pervasive as it is problematic. See Biran, *Qaidu*.

[82] Zhao Xianhai ("Hongwu chunian Gansu diyuan," p. 93) suggests that fear about Mongol nobles in the northwestern Mongolian steppe explain why the Yuan court did not move further westward but instead relied on support from the regions of the Liaodong and Lingbei Branch Secretariats.

steppe, long expanses of the transitional steppe-sedentary zone, and consolidated blocs of territory in Liaodong and Yunnan. Written documents issued by the Great Yuan after its flight to the steppe include letters of recommendation, personnel records, and official appointment. They show that some Yuan administrative systems survived into the early 1370s.[83]

Toghan-Temür maintained an active military posture. He conferred regularly with his military commanders in the field. In mid-September 1368, just four days after leaving the capital, he met with Sayyid-Temür, the Liaodong Assistant Grand Councilor, who arrived with 5,000 cavalry warriors.[84] The emperor retained an imperial bodyguard. He also issued commands to Köke-Temür and the Koryŏ king to send military assistance. His generals launched military strikes on Ming positions. For instance, in March 1369, 40,000 Yuan cavalry troops attacked Tongzhou, a key entrêpot located south of Daidu.[85] Two months later, Toghan-Temür and his advisors drew up plans to attack the capital itself.[86]

During the summer of 1369, Yuan troops suffered military losses against Zhu Yuanzhang's armies, but they blunted the Ming's advance. This was no small accomplishment. Ming forces were large and battle-tested. In July 1369, Yuan troops clashed with a Ming army of 100,000 men commanded by the redoubtable general Chang Yuchun (1330–69).[87] In fact, in September, the Yuan court attempted to exploit a Ming drive into the steppe to attack the now lightly defended Datong, a key northern border garrison.[88] The strike failed, but it demonstrated to both the Ming throne and Mongol nobles that the Yuan court was not a spent force.

A New Great Khan: Ayushiridara

Immediately upon Toghan-Temür's death in 1370, his son, Ayushiridara (1340–78, r. 1370–78), took the title Great Khan, thus realizing ambitions that dated back nearly a decade. While still in Daidu, he and his Korean-born mother Empress Ki (1315–69?) had attempted first to cajole and later to coerce Toghan-Temür into yielding the reins of power, which complicated court politics and heightened father-son tensions.[89] Having held important government positions and cultivated a base of support, Ayushiridara was fully prepared to take charge in the fall of 1370. His reign marked a partial revival of the Great Yuan's fortunes. Like his predecessors dating back to 1271, Ayushiridara proclaimed a Chinese reign name, Xuanguang, to mark his rule's

[83] Pan and Chen, "Heishuicheng chutu Yuandai Yijinai lu." [84] *BXSJ*, p. 3.
[85] *MTZSL*, 41.1a, p. 816. [86] *BXSJ*, p. 5. [87] *MTZSL*, 43.2b, p. 846.
[88] *BXSJ*, pp. 5–6; *MTZSL*, 44.2a–b, pp. 859–60.
[89] Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 121, 224–25, 249–50.

beginning.[90] Scholars since the Qing dynasty have explained Xuanguang as an allusion to well-known passage in a work by the famous poet, Du Fu (712–70) of the Tang period.

> The Zhou and Han achieved restorations;
> Xuan and Guang were indeed brilliantly wise.

Xuan refers to the Prince of Xuan (r. 827–782 BCE) of the Zhou dynasty and Guang to Emperor Guangwu (r. 145–46) of the Han dynasty. Both were men who accomplished dynastic restorations after internal and external threats had forced the capital's relocation and threatened to topple the regime.[91] Thus, Ayushiridara's reign name announces his determination to restore the Great Yuan. Such a lofty mission also places Ayushiridara in the ranks of great rulers of the past. Finally, such a message in such a form suggests that its primary audience was men with a Sinophone classical education, whether they were of Chinese, Korean, Jurchen, Kitan, Mongol, or Turkic background and whether they were subjects of the Yuan, Ming, or Koryŏ dynasties. After all, the reign name alludes to a Tang poem that celebrates emperors of the distant Chinese past.

Despite such lofty claims, Ayushiridara's reign began in chaos. On June 9, 1370, a Ming army led by General Li Wenzhong (Zhu Yuanzhang's nephew) defeated Yuan forces and then surrounded Yingchang's walls. The next day, Yuan defenses collapsed. In the ensuing confusion, General Li captured more than 100 nobles, including Toghan-Temür's grandson, his consorts, and senior generals. Ming forces also seized symbols of political authority, such as jade seals of state from the Song and Yuan dynastic families and gold registers of investiture that the Yuan court had transported from Daidu to the steppe as part of its imperial regalia.[92] General Li's men also secured tens of thousands of camels, horses, cattle, and sheep. The war booty was all transported to Nanjing as visible evidence of the Great Ming's prowess and the Great Yuan's collapse. Ayushiridara narrowly escaped on horseback with a few dozen men. General Li and an elite force of cavalry troops pursued them as far as Qingzhou (today's Baichengzi in the Bairin Right Banner, Inner Mongolia) before abandoning the chase.[93]

[90] As Fang Linggui ("Guanyu Beiyuan") notes, scholars debate whether the Xuanguang reign began in 1370, when Ayushiridara took power, or 1371, the first full year of his reign. The latter seems more likely and is adopted here.

[91] Kanda Kiichirō, "Gen no Shōshū"; Wada, "Mindai no Mōko to Manshū," p. 307. Cao Yongnian ("*Beixun siji* suojian," p. 52) identifies the Zhou ruler as Xuanguang rather than Xuan wang, or Prince of Xuan.

[92] *MTZSL*, 52.6a, p. 1021; *MS*, 126.12.3744; anonymous, *Bei ping lu*, *GCDG*, 7.1.159.

[93] Identification of Qingzhou follows Wada, "Minsho no Mōko keiryaku," p. 8.

Later chapters discuss this victory's significance for the Ming dynasty; here the focus is the Yuan court. First, despite intense military pressure by Ming forces, Ayushiridara managed a smooth transition of rulership from his father Toghan-Temür. This did much to ensure the continuation of the dynasty in both senses of the word, that is, the House of Qubilai, most particularly Toghan-Temür's family, and the Great Yuan polity. In the early decades of the fourteenth century, repeated succession crises produced bloodshed and instability. As noted, Toghan-Temür's father, Qoshila (r. 1328–29), reigned briefly before being poisoned to death by his brother.[94] In contrast, Ayushiridara took up the reins of power as an adult facing no immediate internal threat to his authority at court. A cynic might argue that the Great Yuan was so enfeebled that few considered contesting its succession. The lack of surviving documentary evidence does not allow us to rule out the possibility that fighting over the throne did occur. Nonetheless, a violent or protracted succession crisis could well have ended the Great Yuan in 1370.

Second, Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and their advisors retained emblems of legitimacy and power such as jade seals, tablets of investiture, and dynastic titles that were essential to the maintenance of a court and a dynasty. These symbols grew from Chinese traditions but had been fully incorporated into the Great Yuan's political culture.[95] When in 1276 the Mongol general Bayan accepted Empress Dowager's surrender in the Song capital of Hangzhou, he immediately took possession of not only government armories and warehouses but also items that linked the current ruling house to those of the past, including the Song imperial family's collection of paintings and seals. One grizzled Ming commander's memoirs explicitly note that Toghan-Temür fled from Daidu with his seals of office.[96] Despite its dire circumstances, the Great Yuan court still held those Song dynastic seals in 1370. This appropriation of local political culture and language was widespread throughout the Mongol empire. In the case of seals, it proved enduring. Seventeenth and eighteenth century Mongol chronicles include lengthy descriptions of one seal in particular, the Seal of Dynastic Transmission, which became tightly linked to Chinggis Khan himself (see more shortly).[97]

If the seals of office reflect continuity with the Great Yuan's glory days, the "incalculable number" of livestock that Ming army seized at Yingchang in 1370 suggests a court adapting to the steppe's physical and political conditions. Large flocks of livestock, in this case camels, horses, cattle, and sheep, were a standard steppe measure of power and wealth. Portable, they were well

[94] For this period's political history, see Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, "Mid-Yuan Politics." For Qoshila's reign in the wider context of competing political interests, see Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians*, pp. 26–30.
[95] He Qilong, "MengYuan he ManQing," pp. 3–19.
[96] *JSLJZ*, p. 264.
[97] Elverskog *(The Jewel Translucent Sutra*, p. 69).

suited to the court's seasonal movement. Alternating residence between Daidu and Shangdu, with regular hunting trips en route between the two capitals, the Yuan court had spent nearly a month and a half on the road each year for much of the last century. During the 1350s and 1360s such imperial progresses diminished, and trips to Shangdu halted altogether after 1358. However, a peripatetic court had been a signature feature of the Great Yuan. Although often driven by Ming military pressure, the Yuan court's movement after 1368 thus continued earlier practices. Finally, the large herds of livestock were a form of economic and political capital, suggesting that even after 1368 the Great Yuan attracted and supported sizeable adherents.

There is no denying, however, that the Ming raid in June 1370 could have been a fatal beginning to Ayushiridara's reign. The new Great Khan only narrowly escaped, losing much of the political and economic capital his father had so carefully husbanded. Circumstances, however, would soon change.

3 Changing Fortunes

Despite the dire conditions of Ayushiridara's enthronement, within two years, Yuan military forces had regrouped and scored several important victories. In 1372, Zhu Yuanzhang organized a massive three-prong attack on Mongol forces based in eastern Mongolia, Qara-Qorum, and Qara-Qoto (in today's western Inner Mongolia). The Ming emperor mobilized more than 150,000 soldiers and appointed some of his most experienced and trusted commanders to lead the campaign. Near Qara-Qorum, Mongol forces drew the Ming army under the veteran commander Xu Da deep into unfamiliar territory. Supply lines grew overstretched. Ming imperial troops faltered in the face of fatigue and hunger. Bitter cold and high winds intensified their suffering.[1] Mongol forces then decimated Xu Da's exhausted army. The second Ming contingent devastated much of the region northward from the Tu'ula (also spelled Tuul and Tula) River to the Orkhon River region, but they also suffered heavy casualties.[2] The third prong fulfilled its mission, preventing Köke-Temür from coming to the assistance of the Yuan court on the steppe. However, the Ming commander (Feng Sheng, 1330–95) immediately withdrew from western Gansu with no effort to establish a lasting Ming military presence.[3] The strategic Hexi Corridor thus remained under Yuan control.[4]

This was the most serious military defeat that the young Ming court had ever experienced.[5] Later the same year, Yuan commander Naghachu attacked the Ming dynasty's most important supply depot in Liaodong, Niujia Village

[1] Chen Wuqiang ("Ming Hongwuchao," p. 117) notes that initially Ming armies were markedly more successful in north China and the southern steppe than they were in the northern steppe.

[2] Wada, "Mindai no Mōko to Manshū," p. 308; *Mingdai Menggushi lunji*, vol. 1, pp. 14–17; Dalizhabu, "Bei Yuan chuqi shishi," in *Ming Qing Menggushi*, pp. 6–8; Langlois, "Hung-wu," pp. 128–29.

[3] See Chapter 4.

[4] Li Ling, "Yuanmo Mingchu Bei Yuan," p. 111. Chapter 4 explores conditions in Gansu and Hexi Corridor, including the Ming army's pell-mell flight in 1372.

[5] The defeats had a lasting impact on Zhu Yuanzhang. During his final year of life, he warned his sons not to allow themselves to be drawn deeply into the steppe lest they fall prey to Mongol ambushes. Zhu Yuanzhang referred explicitly to the 1372 debacle at Qara-Qorum. See, *DMYZ* 4.6a–8a, vol. 1, pp. 419–23, esp. 4.8a, p. 423; *MTZSL*, 253.6b, p. 3658; *GQ*, 10.1.776.

(Niujiazhuang), a fortified relay station located on the core imperial highway that led northward to Liaoyang and Shenyang (in today's Liaoning Province) (**see Map 2.1**). Niujia Village was located along the Sancha River, which made possible the delivery by ship of bulk items such as grain and war material from southern Ming territories. Naghachu killed more than 5,000 imperial soldiers. He also burned more than 100,000 piculs of grain.[6] To put these numbers into perspective, a fully manned Ming garrison was about 5,600 men. Scholars estimate that during the Ming period one adult consumed on average slightly more than three piculs of rice each year.[7] Based on the figures Ming military planners used, 100,000 piculs of grain would support 220,000 troops for one month or 74,000 troops for three months.[8] The Great Yuan's emphatic victories in 1372 shocked the Ming court into a more defensive posture vis-à-vis the Great Yuan for most of the remainder of the 1370s.[9]

Hoping to capitalize on the momentum of his recent military successes, early in 1373 Ayushiridara dispatched an envoy to the Koryŏ court in search of support. His imperial rescript is preserved in the *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* but not found in Ming records. It reads:

> Recently because of the chaos of war, [We] relocated to the north. Now with Köke-Temür as prime minister, [we] are close to a revival. The King is also a grandson of Qubilai. It is appropriate that [you] offer support to restore [Our] rule throughout the realm.[10]

Ayushiridara's rendition of events acknowledges no dynastic break and relinquishes no claims to rule. Yes, the Great Yuan had relocated north in response to military exigencies. This temporary move, however, is soon to be remedied through Köke-Temür's capable command. Further, Ayushiridara's appeal to family, including shared descent from Qubilai, implicitly denies any real dynastic rupture.[11] The same dynastic houses that held power in 1271, the Great Yuan and the Koryŏ, still did a century later in 1373. Such a formulation serves simultaneously to reject the Ming court's claims about 1368 as a transformative moment, renew the Great Yuan's ties to a glorious forefather, and convince the Koryŏ king to uphold long-standing allegiances.

[6] *MTZSL*, 76.7a, p. 1407; Yun Ŭnsuk, "Pukwŏn kwa Myŏng," pp. 91–96.
[7] Li Bozhong, "Changes in Climate, Land, and Human Efforts," p. 480. I thank Martin Heijdra for drawing my attention to this passage.
[8] Okuyama, *Mindai gunseishi kenkyū*, pp. 297, 302–3. I thank Masato Hasegawa for drawing my attention to this essay and providing the grain calculations based on his research findings.
[9] As Dreyer (*Early Ming China*, p. 75) notes, Zhu Yuanzhang's recalibration of his stance vis-à-vis the steppe also reflected other military challenges, namely intensification of Japanese coastal piracy and widespread unrest in newly subjugated territory in Guangxi, Huguang, Sichuan, and Shaanxi.
[10] *KS*, 44.3.1327.
[11] In 1442, the reigning Great Khan, Toqto'a-Buqa, used nearly identical terms to justify his claims to Korean loyalty.

King Kongmin withheld the military assistance that Ayushiridara wanted, but the king's assassination in 1374 and the enthronement of a new sovereign opened the door to renewed diplomatic ties between the Koryŏ and Yuan courts. Representatives from the Great Yuan repeatedly visited the Koryŏ court, assiduously wooing the new king and his senior advisors. In 1377, the Koryŏ king announced the restoration of the Yuan legal code, accepted investiture from Ayushiridara, and adopted his reign title to mark time.[12] For the Great Yuan court, these were hard-won, reassuring diplomatic triumphs. Recognizing the Great Yuan's resurgence and otherwise occupied with political consolidation at home, between 1374 and 1380, the Ming court avoided military engagements with the Chinggisids. The Great Yuan had won a much-needed respite.

Ayushiridara based his court in Qara-Qorum in the middle of today's Mongolia. During its early days, the Mongol empire drew enormous wealth into the steppe. In the mid-thirteenth century, Qara-Qorum, the Great Mongol Empire's first capital, had been among the world's premier consumption cities.[13] The majority of what its residents consumed was transported overland from great distances and thus at considerable expense to this city along the Orkhon River.[14] In the 1230s, "every day five hundred wagons fully loaded with food and drink" were delivered from Chinese provinces to Qara-Qorum.[15] As much as 1,000 tons of food and drink arrived daily.[16] Archeological materials from Qara-Qorum abundantly confirm the rich flow of goods from across Eurasia. They include Pharaonic maskettes,[17] a yellow copper bowl with an Arabic inscription,[18] beads produced by Turkic speaking Muslims from Bulgar,[19] and a variety of regional Chinese ceramics and porcelains.[20]

During the second half of the thirteenth century, Qara-Qorum's status changed as the dynamics of the empire shifted. Mongol nobles created new capitals and princely complexes far beyond the Mongolian steppe, in places like today's Kolobovka (Russia), Tabriz (Iran), Baghdad (Iraq), Qarshi

[12] *KS*, 133.10.4005-06; *KSCY*, 30.24a, p. 761; 30.28b, p. 762.
[13] Or second if we count Avraga in the Kerülen River basin as Chinggis' first palace and capital. See Shiraishi, "Avraga Site."
[14] Rogers, "Urban Centres"; Rösch et al., "Human Diet." Despite Qara-Qorum's local production capacity, it depended on materials and human talent drawn from elsewhere in the empire and beyond. See Bemmann et al., *Mongolian-German*.
[15] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, Boyle trans., pp. 62–63. Cited in Smith, "Dietary Decadence and Dynastic Decline," p. 40.
[16] Smith, "Dietary Decadence and Dynastic Decline," p. 41.
[17] For color photograph of one pharaonic maskette, see Rogers, "Ancient Cities," p. 130, figure 16.6.
[18] Elikhina, "Most Interesting Artefacts," p. 43. [19] Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture," p. 62.
[20] Erdenebat, Janßen-Kim, and Pohl, "Two Ceramic Deposits"; Elikhina, "Most Interesting Artefacts," pp. 45–46.

(Uzbekistan), and Beijing (China).[21] Qara-Qorum retained political and military significance, as attested in repeated battles between the Yuan dynasty and steppe-based rivals to control the city and its environs. Yuan emperors renewed ties to the steppe through great seasonal progresses along imperial highways from Daidu to Shangdu that involved large-scale royal hunts and sojourns at numerous preserves.[22] However, archeological excavations of the city's north-south boulevard show that by the fourteenth century, road construction had become rough pavement, which archeologists describe as a result of worsening road maintenance.[23] We will return to Qara-Qorum's deteriorating pavement later.

Chinggis and his advisors had originally selected Qara-Qorum as a capital because of its lush grasslands, vital to support large numbers of horses, a central pillar of the Mongol military.[24] Strong historic ties to earlier Turkic empires, which had drawn on the site's *qut* or good fortune, may also account for the site's attraction to the Mongol elite. Although its political and economic status faded after the mid-thirteenth century, Qara-Qorum was widely known on the steppe as "a major repository of spiritual power" still closely tied to Chinggisid glory.[25]

Toghan-Temür and his court advisors understood Qara-Qorum's charismatic genealogy. In fact, they attempted to exploit it to enhance Toghan-Temür's legitimacy. In 1342, the Yuan court authorized repairs to a large stupa in Qara-Qorum and the five-story pavilion in which it was housed. The Mongolian and Chinese versions of the commemorative account of the repairs explicitly refer to the Grand Progenitor (Chinggis Khan) and review Toghan-Temür's genealogy, including his illustrious forefathers Ögödei, Möngke, and Ayurbarwada. The accounts culminate with Toghan-Temür "recalling his ancestor's place of origin and the hardships accompanying the construction by the 'Two Sages' (i.e. Ögödei and Möngke)." This was an effort to bolster the young Toghan-Temür's standing by placing him in a direct line of succession of storied Great Khans and by rooting that line in "his ancestor's place of origin," that is, Qara-Qorum. The inscription stresses that

[21] Biran, "Rulers and City Life"; Blair, "Tabriz"; Dardess, "Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty," pp. 118–20; Kramarovsky, "Conquerors and Craftsmen"; Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly"; "Seasonal Capitals"; Sun, "Dadu."

[22] Ye Xinmin, *Yuan Shangdu*, pp. 37–45, 332–42; Chen Gaohua and Shi Weimin, *Yuandai Dadu Shangdu*, pp. 156–87; Yuan Ji, "Yuandai liangdujian yilu." Dardess ("Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule," p. 562) notes that in 1347, the trip from Daidu to Shangdu took twenty-three days. Each year the emperor spent approximately a month and a half on the road.

[23] Pohl, "Excavations in the Craftsmen-Quarter," pp. 69–79, esp. 78–79; Erdenebat and Pohl, "Crossroads in Khara Khorum," p. 141.

[24] di Cosmo, "Why Qara Qorum?"

[25] Allsen, "Spiritual Geography," pp. 121–28.

the "construction's magnificence and loftiness" perfectly capture the Great Yuan's wealth and power.[26]

Since no later than 1369, advisors had tried to convince Toghan-Temür that a move to Qara-Qorum was necessary. Men like Köke-Temür and Qara-Jang proposed the adoption of Qara-Qorum as a dynastic capital and establishment of an alliance with "the princes of the northwest." Northwest princes presumably refer to nobles of the Moghul khanate, headed at least in name by Chaghadai's descendants (discussed in Chapter 1). With a secure base and an infusion of new military resources, combined with its still strong prestige, the Great Yuan court could reclaim its rightful place in eastern Eurasia – or so Ayushiridara hoped and renewed ties with the Koryŏ dynasty suggested.[27]

Recent archeological excavations of Qara-Qorum's uppermost, and thus most recent, layers suggest that the Yuan court's return in 1370 may have sparked a transient revival of the steppe capital's past glory. Scholars write of "the remarkably high quality" of the bronze mirrors and a wonderfully expressive porcelain lion with a light blue glaze from the Qingbai kilns of China. In addition, archeologists have discovered a metal workshop in the uppermost layers of the excavation area, which includes several kinds of kilns, two single-shaft furnaces for smelting metal, and fragments of sheet bronze found together with bits of leather and textile fragments, likely used for padding during the final stages of metal working.[28] Also found in this layer was a copper alloy seal from the Great Yuan Ministry of Revenue dated the second month of the second year of the Xuanguang reign, that is, April 1372, a reminder that the Great Yuan maintained its own calendar and, more fundamentally, its claim to standing as an imperial court.[29] No matter how modest Qara-Qorum's revival in the late fourteenth century, the Great Yuan did not doubt its right to rule.

Soon after becoming Great Khan, Ayushiridara moved quickly to secure allegiance in the Tibetan borderlands. He sent an imperial Buddhist preceptor from Qara-Qorum to local leaders in Do kham (northeastern Tibet), Ü tsang (central and western Tibet), and Do mé (eastern Tibet) as well as Linzhao and Gongchang (both in today's Gansu Province). His mission was to deliver the emblems of the new Great Khan's authority – gold, silver, and copper alloy

[26] Cleaves, "Sino-Mongol Inscription of 1346," pp. 29–30, 79–84. The verse epitaph following the commemorative inscription's prose sections similarly foregrounds Toghan-Temür's emulation of his illustrious ancestors, beginning with Chinggis Khan (pp. 33–34).

[27] Cao Yongnian, "*Beixun siji* suojian."

[28] Erdenebat and Pohl, "Crossroads in Khara Khorum," pp. 143 and 145.

[29] Nagel, "Secretary's Seal." Pohl ("Excavations in the Craftsmen-Quarter," p. 134) warns that the seal "cannot be brought into a clear stratigraphical association" with parts of a building from this layer. Thus, the erection of street level three and the complexes in later building levels (E.4 and W.6) cannot be dated more precisely than the fourteenth century.

seals, imperial orders, and documents of authorization. The imperial preceptor's brief was to persuade local leaders to acknowledge Ayushiridara. The plan failed. Ming military authorities learned of the mission and sent a contingent of 500 cavalry troops to intercept Ayushirida's envoys, who were delivered to Nanjing.[30]

This keen diplomatic competition unfolded in other ways. The Great Yuan and its supporters never acknowledged Zhu Yuanzhang's regime as a legitimate polity. A fragment of a 1372 document issued by a Yuan provincial office disparages the military forces under the Ming general Feng Sheng as "Red Rebels" (*hong zei*).[31] The same term appears in a brief 1372 travel inscription preserved in one of the famous Dunhuang grottos.[32] During the 1350s and early 1360s, state authorities and private individuals in the Great Yuan and Koryŏ dynasties had routinely used expressions like Red Rebels, Red Turban Rebels, Red Head Rebels, and Sorcerer Rebels to denigrate millenarian rebels, because they often wore red clothing and used red battle pennants.[33] Just as the Ming court loudly insisted that the Great Yuan was no longer a legitimate dynasty, the Yuan court maintained that Zhu Yuanzhang and his forces were murderous rebels driven by visions of apocalyptic chaos. In his *Northern Tour*, Liu Ji matter-of-factly refers to Ming forces as rebels and Ming generals as rebel leaders. This nicely mirrors the Ming court, which termed its enemies as rebels, thieves, and caitiffs. In 1372, for instance, Zhu Yuanzhang dismissed Köke-Temür as "nothing more than a lone desperado on the boreal steppe."[34]

Ayushiridara's officials used seals to authorize orders, requests, and other paperwork circulating through the Great Yuan bureaucracy. Copper alloy seals inscribed with Ayushiridara's reign name, Xuanguang, and his successor Toghus-Temür's reign name, Tianyuan, have been found in today's Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, and Jilin. The Great Yuan court issued these seals to a

[30] *JSLJZ*, p. 370. Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the captured envoy to translate Ming edicts into Tibetan and to deliver them to the Tibetan borderlands. According to this account, the envoy "falsely translated" the emperor's meaning. The ruse was discovered when military authorities along the border ordered that the Tibetan versions of the imperial edicts be retranslated into Chinese, presumably to check their accuracy. Zhu Yuanzhang then had the Imperial Preceptor drowned to death.

[31] "Xuanguang er nian Gansu deng chu xing zhongshusheng Yijinai fen sheng zi wen" (Doc. TK 204V), *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209; Sun, *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 42–22. See also Ma Shunping, "Bei Yuan 'Xuanguang"; Chen Guangwen, "Dunhuang Mogaoku di 237 ku," pp. 89–90.

[32] Pelliot (*Grottes de Touen-Houang*, vol. 3, p. 28 [cave 84]; Geng Sheng, trans. *Boxihe Dunhuang shiku biji*, pp. 158–59); Chen Guangwen, "Dunhuang Mogaoku di 237 ku," p. 88.

[33] Chen Gaohua, "Yuanmo nongmin qiyijun minghao."

[34] *MTZSL*, 71.5a, p. 1321. In the 1640s, rebel leader Zhang Xianzong, similarly disparaged the "Zhu dynasty" and "the bandit Zhu's Yang So-and-so," meaning the Ming commander Yang Sichang. See Gu Cheng, *Mingmo nongmin*, pp. 203–4.

mix of civil and military authorities. They include Grand Defender,[35] the Offices of the right and left of the Gansu Branch Secretariat,[36] officer manager of the Office of the Right of the Secretariat,[37] and the Chief Brigade of the Mongol Army of Shaanxi and Sichuan[38] among others. The seals are written in Pakpa (also translitered as 'Phags-pa'), a phonetic script developed at the Yuan court in the late thirteenth century to transcribe all the languages under Mongol rule. Never supplanting local written languages, the Pakpa script was a tool of governance, closely tied to empire. Ayushiridara's court may have hoped to exploit an association with more prosperous days. Abandoning Pakpa script on official seals would have revealed a rupture in administrative practices and signaled a diminished polity.[39]

The Great Yuan court boasted another source of legitimacy, possession of the Seal of Dynastic Transmission (*chuanguoxi*). This imperial seal was widely (albeit inaccurately) held to have been passed from dynasty to dynasty back to the fall of the Qin in the third century BC. Thus, it constituted a critical symbol in the succession of legitimate dynasties. Its connection to the Yuan court began after Qubilai's death, when the seal was said to have suddenly resurfaced after decades of chaotic warfare. Thus, the Seal of Dynastic Transmission mattered for both Mongolian and Chinese audiences.

When Toghan-Temür fled Daidu, he took the seal. Given the fierce competition between the Yuan and Ming courts, Zhu Yuanzhang was keen to secure the seal. According to a privately compiled miscellany from the late fourteenth century, despite his great successes, Zhu Yuanzhang identified three matters of unfinished business. He did not have the Seal of Dynastic Transmission. Köke-Temür (the powerful Mongol general just mentioned) was still at large. And finally, Ayushiridara refused to communicate with the Ming court, that is,

[35] The Forbidden Palace Museum in Beijing holds two such seals, dated the first and fifth years of the Xuanguang reign (1371 and 1375 respectively). The 1371 seal entered the Qing imperial collection in 1771; the second seal's provenance is unclear. See Wang Rencong, *Xinchu lidi xiyin jishi*, pp. 111–12. For the 1371 seal, see Farquhar, "Official Seals," pp. 384–85. For a photograph of a Grand Defender seal held at the Forbidden Palace Museum, see Luo Fuyi, *Gugong bowuyuan cang guxiyin*, pp. 149–50.

[36] This seal is dated the fifth year of the Tianyuan reign period, that is, 1383. See Luo Fuyi, "Bei Yuan guanyin," p. 34; Wang, *Xinchu lidi xiyin jishi*, p. 112. For a photograph, see Luo Fuyi, *Gugong bowuyuan cang guxiyin*, pp. 151–52.

[37] Qiao Jintong, "Yuandai de tongyin."

[38] Li and Huang, "Bei Yuan yiwu," p. 27

[39] Some suggest that a small coin inscribed with the characters "Treasure of Xuanguang" (*Xuanguang zhi bao*) was currency for Ayushiridara's court. See the journal *Quan bi* (Chinese nuministics) no. 16, p. 37. Cited in Boyan, "Xuanguang, Tianyuan nianhao." There is, however, no supporting evidence for such conjecture. In a silk painting excavated at Qara-Qoto and now held at the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), the crowned Buddha holds in one hand a coin inscribed with the reign name Tianyuan. For a color reproduction, see Piotrovsky, *Lost Empire*, figure 59, p. 235. A black-and-white detail of the coin is found on p. 80. I thank Vladimir Uspensky for bringing this reference to my attention. A color photograph with inset of the coin in hand is found in *HSCYSP*, vol. 1, figure 7.

he rejected the Ming as a legitimate dynasty.[40] In the following centuries, the Seal of Dynastic Transmission would retain its power.[41]

During the thirteenth century, many Mongol rulers practised large-scale, extended imperial itineracy, maintaining large mobile courts that regularly traveled long distances. This was a strategy to display power, induce obedience, extract resources, and offer sacrifices. Such enhanced mobility developed hand in hand with the creation of sedentary residences and exploitation of other non-pastoral resources.[42] In addition to maintaining a walled city at Qara-Qorum as a dynastic capital, Ayushiridara and Toghus-Temür maintained large *ordos* or mobile courts, which traveled seasonally in eastern Mongolia. Reliable information is scarce, but contemporary Ming dynastic accounts claim that these mobile courts included as many as 100,000 people. In 1388, the Ming general Lan Yu (1330–93) captured nearly 80,000 people when he launched a successful surprise attack on the Great Yuan court near Lake Buir (more on this in Chapter 6).[43] In the post-1368 period, these seasonal migrations may have become economic necessities as the Great Yuan lost the ability to support a large court at a fixed location on the steppe for any length of time. However, in a time of uncertain allegiances, itineracy may have gained even greater importance in securing political loyalty and extracting economic and military resources. In any case, mobility and sedentary residences were not mutually exclusive.

Drawing upon these spiritual, military, and political resources, the Great Yuan court pursued its claims to legitimacy and power in Eurasia, fielding powerful armies that clashed with the forces of the newly ascendant Ming court. If the Yuan court suffered defeats, until the late 1380s, it could also claim major triumphs.

Waning Fortunes

On November 4, 1388, 3,000 members of the Yuan court arrived in Nanjing. As a token of their submission and respect, they offered horses to the Ming emperor. Zhu Yuanzhang in turn warmly welcomed them. He appointed a Mongol commander serving in his elite Brocade Guard to greet the newcomers and distribute gifts from the throne.[44] The sudden appearance of the huge contingent of Mongol elites at the Ming court grew out of startling

[40] The observations appear in Ye Ziqi's *Cao mu zi yu lu* as cited in *YSTBJ*, 20.1.361. Cited in Cao Yongnian, "Chuanguoxi," p. 62. Chen Jian also includes the three matters of unfinished business in his 1555 *Huang Ming tong ji* (also known as *Huang Ming zi zhi tong ji*), 6.1.186. The *Ming Veritable Records* account of Zhu Yuanzhang's motivation for the 1372 campaign omits these goals. See *MTZSL*, 71.5a, p. 1321; *GQ*, 5.1.461-62.

[41] See Iwai, "DaiShin teikoku."

[42] Atwood, "Imperial Itinerance and Mobile Pastoralism."

[43] Also transcribed Buyur.

[44] *MTZSL*, 194.1a–b, pp. 2909–10.

developments on the steppe. The reigning Great Khan, Toghus-Temür, had been murdered.

Toghus-Temür had been named Great Khan in spring 1378, following the death of Ayushiridara.[45] As Chapters 7 and 9 show, the Ming court exploited the uncertainty surrounding the succession to try to prise away members of the Great Yuan ruling house and its supporters. Its success was only mixed. The Koryŏ king restored use of the Hongwu reign title but retained his Great Yuan investiture as king and accepted an additional prestige title in 1380.[46] During these decades, the Koryŏ court used the expressions Great Ming and Great Yuan to designate its most powerful neighbors. This suggests that it viewed them as two polities of analogous legitimacy.[47] It is true that in 1385, the Koryŏ king accepted Ming investiture. He also heartily congratulated Zhu Yuanzhang on signal victories over the Yuan court, such as Naghachu's submission in 1387 and the military triumph at Lake Buir in 1388.[48] Yet in the same year, 1388, the Koryŏ court briefly abolished use of the Hongwu reign title and ordered its subjects to wear the clothing of the Great Yuan.[49]

Toghus-Temür's court retained elements of pre-1368 court protocol and political symbols. Officials and commanders used bureaucratic titles.[50] A 1388 entry from the *Digest of the Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* notes, "the remnant bastards of the fallen Yuan house have fled into the steppe; they vainly proclaim empty titles."[51] Although the tone is dismissive and the intention to discredit a military alliance with Yuan forces mooted at the Koryŏ court, the comment shows that the Great Yuan court maintained administrative titles and/or a dynastic title. Months later, the Koryŏ court congratulated Zhu Yuanzhang for his triumph at Lake Buir, when Ming forces surprised the unprepared Yuan court. The congratulatory document specifically mentions the Ming force's capture of the Great Yuan's seal of state, again showing the

[45] For Toghus-Temür and Ayushiridara as brothers, see Wada, "Hoku Gen no teikei," p. 1204; Honda, "On the Genealogy," p. 236. Other leading specialists, in contrast, hold that Toghus-Temür was Ayushiridara's second son. See Serruys, *Mongols in China*, fn. 244, p. 186; Boyinhu, "Guanyu Bei Yuan," pp. 42–44; Cao Yongnian, *Menggu minzu tongshi*, vol. 3, p. 18. Others believe that Toghus-Temür was the same person as Maidaribala, whom Zhu Yuanzhang had captured in a 1372 Ming victory and subsequently held hostage for several years outside Nanjing before returning him to the Great Yuan court. This idea originates in a 1408 letter from Zhu Di i to Bunyashiri.

[46] *KS*, 133.10.4018; *KSCY*, 30.42b, p. 769; *KS*, 134.10.4033; *KSCY*, 31.15b, p. 779; Kwŏn Kŭn, *Yangch'on chip*, 24.4b–5a (*HGMJ*, vol. 7, pp. 238–39).

[47] *KS*, 134.10.4042–43.

[48] *MTZSL*, 174.2b–3a, pp. 2648–49; *KSCY*, 32.34a–b, p. 808; *KS*, 136.10.4114; *KSCY*, 32.46b–47a, pp. 814–15; *KS*, 137.10.4140; *KSCY*, 33.47b, p. 840.

[49] *KS*, 137.10.4126; *KSCY*, 33.12a, p. 822.

[50] Dalizhabu, "Bei Yuan zhengzhi zhidu," *Ming Qing Menggushi,* pp. 83–86; "Bei Yuan chuqi shishi," *Ming Qing Menggushi*, pp. 16–19.

[51] *KSCY*, 33.16b, p. 823.

retention of widely recognized emblems of political authority.[52] One gets a sense of the Great Seal's value by the Ming court's generous rewards granted to the two officers who secured it. Each received 100 taels (or approximately 8 lbs/3.7 kg) of gold and 300 taels (or approximately 24 lbs/11 kg) of silver (200 taels for the second officer). To put these numbers in some perspective, each member of the prestigious committee that compiled the first version of *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* received thirty-two taels of silver and four bolts of patterned silk as a gift from the throne. The head editors received twice those amounts.[53] Finally, the Yuan court continued a portion of its pre-1368 ritual life, such as offerings to Heaven conducted outside the capital's wall, although likely in alternate form. Thus, throughout Toghus-Temür's reign, the Great Yuan retained both prominent international political status and signature features of an imperial court.

Toghus-Temür's control over military, economic, and political resources on the steppe, however, was weaker than that of his predecessors. Ming sources refer in 1380 to a force of 50,000 Yuan riders encamped at Qara-Qorum; the next month this same contingent withdrew to Yijinai Route or Qara-Qoto (in today's western Inner Mongolia) in the face of Ming military pressure.[54] Although the Ming court described this force as belonging to the Great Yuan, there is little evidence that the Great Yuan court directly commanded these men. Instead, regional allies such as Vajravarmi in Yunnan and Naghachu in Liaodong controlled greater military resources.

In the wake of the devastating 1388 defeat at Lake Buir noted earlier, Toghus-Temür, his heir apparent, Tianbaonu, and a few other members the Yuan court escaped the Ming army.[55] They fled westward. Their destination was Qara-Qorum, where they hoped to regroup. Toghus-Temür, however, never made it to Qara-Qorum. They got as far as the Tu'ula River, which is located north of Chinggis Khan International Airport, in today's central Mongolia. There a man named Yisüder attacked the court's advance party, which then scattered in defeat.[56] A handful of the Great Khan's surviving guard, including the commander, soon encountered reinforcements, a group of 3,000 men who had been on their way to receive the Yuan emperor and provide safe escort to Qara-Qorum.[57] Yet another contingent was also reportedly on its way to protect the emperor.[58] United, these three groups might have safely delivered the Great Khan to Qara-Qorum.

[52] *KS*, 137.1.4140; *KSCY*, 33.47b, p. 840. [53] *MTZSL*, 194.1a, p. 2909; *MTZSL*, 44.5a, p. 865.
[54] *GQ*, 7.1.585.
[55] The following description is drawn from *MTZSL*, 194.1a–b, pp. 2909–10. For a brief narrative of the battle, see Dalizhabu, "Bei Yuan chuqi shishi," in *Ming Qing Menggushi*, pp. 14–15.
[56] The name is also transcribed Yesüder. [57] It was led by Grand Mentor Mar-Hasia.
[58] It was led by Köke-Temür (same name but different man than the chief ally of the Great Yuan during its earliest years in the steppe following 1368).

Nature, however, intervened. A three-day blizzard prevented the three groups from converging. Men loyal to Yisüder seized the opportunity to attack Toghus-Temür's beleaguered band. They took the Great Khan captive and strangled him to death with a bowstring. The manner of murder, which avoided spilling blood, was in deference to Toghus-Temür's special status as a Chinggisid noble. They also murdered the heir apparent, Tianbaonu. Having eliminated the Great Khan and his heir, Yisüder and his supporters then fled with the Great Seal in their possession.[59] The *Ming Veritable Records* writes that many who had planned to join Toghus-Temür felt that it would be disgraceful to serve Yisüder. They "thus led their followers to come in submission" to the Ming court.[60]

This account begs many questions. Who was Yisüder and why did he murder the emperor and the heir apparent? A facile response might be that Mongolian politics were ever such, a ruthless, endless struggle for power. This, however, was the first regicide since the Yuan court had left Daidu in 1368. In fact, a reigning Yuan emperor had not been murdered since 1329, when Toghan-Temür's father, Qoshila, had been poisoned to death.

What was the scale and nature of Yisüder's support? The *Ming Veritable Records*' brief account suggests that he had won adherents among a portion of the Mongol nobility, but no further details survive.[61] What about Toghus-Temür's supporters? As noted, the *Ming Veritable Records*' editors indicate that several large groups of Mongol elites had been en route to join the Yuan emperor before his murder. Did Eurasian elites still consider him the sole legitimate successor to the line of Qubilai? Or had conditions on the steppe changed so much that Mongol leaders were reconsidering alliances and prestige across the board?

The dearth of surviving documents prevents easy answers. Scholars debate even basic questions like the identity of Yisüder and his supporters. One historian refers to Yisüder in passing as a "distant relative" of

[59] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, pp. 285–86; Mostaert, *Le matériél mongol*, pp. 28–29; Haenisch, *Sino-Mongolische Dokumente*, pp. 15–16. The careful reader will have noticed that on the one hand, Koryŏ and Ming sources claim that Ming forces seized the Great Yuan dynastic seal in fighting at Lake Buir in 1388, while on the other hand, Nekelei insists that Yisüder made off with the "Great Seal" (*yeke tamgha*) after murdering Toghus-Temür. The apparent tension is perhaps explained by the fact that the Yuan dynasty, like other ruling houses, used several seals for imperial documents. The important point is that contemporary audiences considered acquisition of dynastic seals a compelling element in the transmission of political authority.

[60] *MTZSL*, 194.1b, pp. 2910; *GQ*, 9.1.691. For a brief review of Toghus-Temür's murder, Yesünder's seizure of power, and Engke's enthronement based on Ming and Timurid sources, see Miyawaki, "Mongoru-Oiratto kankeishi," pp. 155–56.

[61] *MTZSL*, 194.1b, p. 2910. Nobles included Great King Qorghudasun and an official from the princely household, Bolad. Transcription of name follows Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 142.

Toghus-Temür.[62] Others describe him as a descendent of Qubilai's brother, Ariq-Böke.[63] They explain that Yisüder, a member of the House of Ariq-Böke, was driven to murder by a smoldering house vendetta. Toghus-Temür headed the House of Qubilai, which a century earlier had betrayed the House of Ariq-Böke.[64] One Mongolian scholar observes, "The old enmity between these two groups of Chinggisids, which had subsided after Ariq-Böke's defeat, resurfaced with new force after Qubilai Qan's descendants were driven from China."[65] In contrast, another Mongolian specialist insists that Yisüder had held relatively senior positions at the Yuan court but was neither Qubilai's relative nor Ariq-Böke's descendant.[66] Finally, the basis of Yisüder's support again divides scholars. It is commonly thought that Yisüder had challenged Toghus-Temür with the support of the Oirats, another group of Mongols, who were based at the time in today's western Inner Mongolia and eastern Xinjiang. However, we lack convincing documentary evidence for such a conclusion. One Mongolian specialist argues instead that Yisüder was a comparative political lightweight who took advantage of his base near the Tu'ula River to attack a vulnerable Yuan emperor.[67]

Conclusions about Yisüder's tie to Ariq-Böke hinge on the testimony of one man, Nekelei. A senior member of Toghus-Temür's court, Nekelei had helped his lord escape the 1388 Lake Buir debacle. Later he led the 3,000 members of the Yuan court in submission to the Ming court noted earlier. His testimony, "Nekelei's Letter," survives in an appendix to the early Ming period Sino-Mongolian dictionary, *Hua yi yi yu*.[68] As the sole piece of direct evidence linking Yisüder to Ariq-Böke, Nekelei's account deserves scrutiny.[69]

Nekelei had every interest in portraying Yisüder in a bad light. It would justify his decision to transfer allegiance to Zhu Yuanzhang in the eyes of the Ming court, Mongols already in the service of the Ming state, and Mongols still on the steppe. Many contemporaries, especially those in Central and West Asia, may have viewed Ariq-Böke with support (or at least sympathy), but most Yuan and Ilkhanate sources cast him as Qubilai's scheming younger brother, the man who nearly strangled the Yuan dynasty in its crib. Ming

[62] John Dardess' entry on Toghus-Temür in *DMB*, p. 1294.
[63] Baoyin ("Guanyu Yesudieer," pp. 6–7) reviews past scholarship arguing that Yisüder was of the House of Ariq-Böke. Baoyin contends that he was of the Ögödei House rather than Ariq-Böke's descendant.
[64] Cai, "Mingdai Menggu," p. 46; Li Xue, "Bei Yuan," pp. 114–15; Boyinhu, "Bei Yuan yu Mingdai Menggu," p. 176; Boyinhu, "Guanyu Bei Yuan," p. 45.
[65] Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, p. 119. [66] Baoyin, "Guanyu Yesudieer," pp. 9–10.
[67] Baoyin, "Guanyu Yesudieer," pp. 10–11.
[68] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, pp. 285–90; Mostaert, *Le matériél mongol*, pp. 28–29; Haenisch, *Sino-Mongolische Dokumente*, pp. 15–16. Serruys ("Dates of the Mongolian Documents," p. 425) dates the letter to November 1388.
[69] Baoyin, "Guanyu Yesudieer."

period narratives about the Yuan dynasty were heirs to this historiographical tradition. Now, according to Nekelei, Yisüder, "a prince in the line of Ariq-Böke," succeeded where his forefather had failed; he had committed regicide and usurped power. There could be no question of serving such a man. Nekelei further asserts that Yisüder had gained the support of the Oirats, a portion of whom had supported Ariq-Böke against Qubilai.[70] In recent decades, scholars have seized on this detail as both evidence of an enduring Qubilaid-Oirat rivalry and harbinger of the Oirats' emergence as kingmakers in the steppe's emerging new political order.[71]

Great Yuan Rulership and Great Ming Patronage

During this time of tumultuous change, how did Mongols perceive the Ming court? The *Ming Veritable Records*' editors offer a clear response. Yisüder had committed regicide, and men of principle refused to accept his leadership. Instead, they turned to Zhu Yuanzhang and the Ming court. The editors here wish to make two points. First, with Toghus-Temür's death, the Great Yuan's line of legitimate succession had finally ended. Second, with its military prowess, munificent treatment of Mongol nobles, and solicitous care of the Qubilai's spirit (see Chapter 6), the Ming court was the clear and honorable alternative to scheming men of obscure birth and an enfeebled court of dubious potential. In fact, in response to Nekelei's request to seek Ming protection and settle his people in Kouwen in the wake of Toghus-Temür's death, Zhu Yuanzhang showed how submission to the Ming dynasty and loyalty to Great Yuan were fully compatible. The Ming emperor voiced his appreciation of Nekelei's motives. The Ming emperor praised Nekelei for both recognizing that Zhu Yuanzhang held sole possession of Heaven's Mandate and his wish to avenge his murdered lord.[72]

Despite such righteous fury, fifteenth-century Persian-language chronicles such as *The Book of Victory* (*Ẓafar-nāma*) and *Genealogy of the Turks* (*Šajarat al-'atrāk*) produced at the Timurid court include Yisüder and his son Engke in their lists of Great Khans.[73] Timurid attention to succession within the Great Yuan derived from its interest in Chinggisid genealogy, which extended

[70] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, p. 286; Mostaert, *Le matériél mongol*, p. 28.
[71] Honda, "On the Genealogy," p. 247; Miyawaki, "Mongoru-Oiratto kankeishi," pp. 159–62.
[72] Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Hongwu yubi*, rpt. in *Gugong zhoukan* 138 (May 1932), pp. 29–30 (consecutive pagination, pp. 1–2 in this issue).
[73] Honda, "On the Genealogy," p. 237 and tables IV, V, and VI; Atwood, *Encyclopedia*, p. 627. Buyandelger ("15 shiji zhongyeqian de Bei Yuan," p. 135) and Boyinhu ("Guanyu Bei Yuan," pp. 44) note that Yisüder reigned for four years as Great Khan as did his son Engke.

well into the fifteenth century and encompassed developments in eastern Mongolia.[74] Timurid chronicles indicate that the last Great Khan of the fourteenth century was Elbeg, whose reign is variously thought to have been 1393–99 or 1394–1401. It is unclear whether he was a descendant of Ariq-Böke or Qubilai. Nor is it known how he came to power.[75]

In contrast, surviving contemporary Ming sources pass in silence over Toghus-Temür's immediate successors. The *Ming Veritable Records* picks up the story in a 1400 entry, which refers to the Great Khan of the Tatars, Gün-Temür.[76] A 1408 communication from the Ming court offers the following summary of the years after Toghus-Temür's death.

> The Yuan's allotted span of rule has already ended. After the Obedient Emperor (Toghan-Temür), [rulership] passed to Ayushiridara [and has now] come to Gün-Temür. In total six men have replaced each other in succession within the span of a blink of the eye or the drawing of a breath. Further, not a single person came to a good end.[77]

The lack of detail about the Great Yuan's succession politics is striking. Since its inception, the Ming court had closely followed Great Yuan political developments. Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly attempted direct communications with Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and Toghus-Temür. He tried to insinuate himself into the Great Yuan ruling house's family affairs by unilaterally announcing Toghan-Temür's posthumous title and maintaining sacrifices for Qubilai. For three years, he held the reigning Great Khan's grandson at his court in Nanjing (see Chapter 5). Following Ayushiridara's death in 1378, he even offered his views on who should become the next Great Khan. It seems unlikely that the Ming court did not know the identity of Toghus-Temür's immediate successors. One might imagine that the destructive succession crisis circa 1398–1402 distracted the Ming court from steppe politics, but the Ming ruling house remained engaged in foreign affairs during those years, seeking material and political support from neighbors.[78] Thus, political upheaval alone does not explain the odd silence. Steppe politics remained among the Ming throne's highest priorities.

[74] Honda, "On the Genealogy," p. 248; Woods, "Timurid Historiography."
[75] Boyinhu, "Guanyu Bei Yuan," pp. 44–45. Okada argues Elbeg was a descendant of Ariq-Böke, and Honda holds that he was Qubilai's descendant. Atwood (*Encyclopedia*, p. 627) follows Honda.
[76] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 6.1a–b, pp. 55–56; cf. Tan Qian (*GQ*, 11.1.814) who has Gün-Temür and the Oirat ruler, Möngke-Temür, submitting at Beiping.
[77] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 77.2a, p. 1043.
[78] Cf. Honda ("On the Genealogy," p. 237) who writes that when the civil war began in 1398, "neither side had time to attend to the Mongols in Mongolia. Thus, no authentic information about them was available at the Ming court at that time."

During the final years of the fourteenth century and continuing into the fifteenth century, steppe politics grew increasingly complex and volatile. As the previous discussion shows, the pool of potential candidates for Great Khan had expanded beyond descendants of Toghan-Temür and even beyond the founder of the Yuan dynasty, Qubilai. Between 1388 and 1438, Great Khans seem to have come from both the Ögödeid and Toluid Houses; among the latter were descendants of both Qubilai and Ariq-Böke.[79] Leading specialists disagree about individual Great Khans' house identity. Even more opaque are the political dynamics and succession principles involved in their selection.[80] Working from well-documented case studies, often from the Ilkhanate, scholars in recent decades have shown that generational seniority, candidates' mothers' status, likely support for Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid elite interests, and military ability were key criterion by which the empire's movers and shakers selected their Great Khan.[81] During nearly every succession, the Chinggisid legacy was invoked in one form or another. Claims were made about candidates' charismatic or genealogical propinquity to Chinggis, knowledge of Chinggisid law and custom, and commitment to previous Great Khan's promises to supporters, maternal affiliations, and leading figures of the day. However, the complete absence of such records for successions between 1388 and the early fifteenth century makes it impossible to state with any confidence how Mongolian elites drew on the Chinggisid legacy or the Great Yuan's heritage to make these momentous decisions.

If after 1388 Mongolian elites continued to think in terms of the Great Yuan, it was a Great Yuan redefined. During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Great Khans were no longer defined exclusively by biological descent from Qubilai much less from Toghan-Temür. Yet in other ways, one can perceive several similarities in political dynamics on either side of the 1388 divide. The sparse surviving records of these Great Khans' careers suggest that they lacked independent bases of political, military, or economic power and instead gained the throne through the support of powerful backers. The importance of powerful backers per se was nothing new. Cultivating such support represents an enduring theme in Mongolian political culture. In the mid-thirteenth century, the Mongol noblewoman Sorghaghtani's spectacular success in cultivating support for her son Möngke's selection as Great Khan permanently changed the Mongolian political landscape, bringing the Toluid House to dominance. The Persian official and chronicler, Rashīd al-Dīn declared her "the most intelligent woman in the world."[82] Neither was the

[79] Honda, "On the Genealogy," p. 247.
[80] Honda ("On the Genealogy," pp. 237–38) indicates Yisüder and his son Engke were of the House of Ariq-Böke and that Elbeg was of the House of Qubilai.
[81] Brack, "Mediating Sacred Kingship," pp. 38–53; Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*.
[82] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, p. 199.

subservience of Khans and Great Khans unprecedented. Already in the 1280s, senior military aristocrats had deposed the Ilkhanate ruler, Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282–84); another, Arghun (r. 1284–91), was reduced temporarily to "a mere figurehead."[83] Several scholars describe the early fourteenth century Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd Ba'atur (r. 1316–35) as a figurehead or puppet controlled by the military aristocracy.[84] During the last decades of the thirteenth century, Emir Noghai dominated the Golden Horde.[85] By no later than Darmashirin's fall in 1334, "a greater impotency of the khans vis-à-vis the emirs" of the Chaghadaids was growing.[86] During his early years as Great Khan, Toghan-Temür too had been completely overshadowed by senior nobles who had orchestrated his enthronement.[87] Even after he gained his majority, Toghan-Temür largely delegated governance and military campaigns to senior ministers and commanders. In the decades following 1388, Oirat leaders often acted as kingmakers.[88] Imperial Ming chronicles and later Mongolian chronicles tend to depict such activities as unprincipled scheming that subverted the proper hierarchy of rulership. Yet, leading lineages of diverse "tribal" background had long played such a role in the Mongol empire.

Despite such similarities, it seems fair to conclude that post-1388 Great Khans generally lacked the military power, religiopolitical charisma, and international standing that their predecessors enjoyed. The Great Khan no longer controlled a unified steppe much less did he exercise any measure of control over irredenta in distant territories. The Chinggisid legacy and Great Yuan heritage remained potent sources of prestige and legitimacy, yet few

[83] Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, pp. 126–40, quotation appears on p. 136.

[84] Melville, "End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 319; Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, pp. 183, 189–96. Fear about likely influence over the young Abū Saʿīd Ba'atur was one factor in the 1319 coup against the powerful amir, Chūpān. See Melville, "Abu Saʿid and the Revolt," pp. 113–14.

[85] Vásáry, "Jochid Realm," p. 77.

[86] Biran, "Mongols in Central Asia," p. 58.

[87] Herbert Franke's entry in *DMB*, pp. 1290–93; Fujishima, "Gen no Juntei"; Qiu Shusen, *Tuohan Tiemuer*, pp. 58–74. In Dardess' classic *Conquerors and Confucians*, Toghan-Temür plays a distinctly secondary role to powerful court figures such as El-Temür, Bayan and Toqto'a. Grupper ("A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," p. 74, fn. 141) concludes that the 1328 coup showed military elites their true political potential and rendered all subsequent Yuan emperors "captives, if not the outright puppets, of one faction or another." Based on what he witnessed during his captivity among the Golden Horde early in the fifteenth century, Schiltberger (*Bondage*, p. 35) wrote, "it is the custom for the king, in Great Tartary, to have a Chief to rule over him, who can elect or depose a king, and has also power over vassals." Elsewhere (pp. 36–37), Schiltberger notes the rapid succession of Great in distant territories Tartary kings.

[88] Honda ("On the Genealogy," p. 247) notes that four or five Great Khans selected between 1388 and 1433 were of the House of Ariq-Böke, all were backed by the Oirats, and that the Great Khans of the Yuan imperial line "were killed directly or indirectly by Oirad of North-West Mongolia, who had given backing to the descendants of Ariq Böke who took the throne in the place of the Yüan line." Harada Rie ("Jūgo seki Mongoru no shihai") makes clear Oirat leaders' role in the selection (and deposition) of Great Khans.

Great Khans had the resources to realize their full potential. Exceptions such as Dayankhan and Ligdan Khan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, respectively, illustrate the rule.

Finally, the diminishing prospects of Great Khans and the men who exercised power in their name enhanced the Great Ming's appeal as patron and protector for Mongols on the steppe and beyond. In the late fourteenth century, tens of thousands of Mongols offered their allegiance to the Ming throne, which used them in diverse capacities and out of varied motives.[89] These Mongols left little evidence of how they understood their relation to the Ming ruler or to the Great Khan. The decision to join the Ming polity involved a careful calculation of interests. As later chapters detail, even in the best of times, Zhu Yuanzhang was a difficult ruler. He was no more trusting of new Mongol subjects and allies than he was of Chinese ones of long standing. The following account of one member of the Great Yuan polity illustrates the opportunities and perils of service under Zhu Yuanzhang.

The Cost of Allegience

Nair-Buqa is one of scores of Mongolian commanders from the late fourteenth century whose name is preserved solely because of Ming dynastic records.[90] Such sources inform us that Nair-Buqa served as a commander under Köke-Temür and held the prestigious title of Grand Defender from the Great Yuan court. Beginning no later than 1373, he clashed repeatedly with Ming forces on the steppe, ranging from the Qara-Qorum region to the Ming's northern borders.[91] Periodically, he signaled interest in joining the Great Ming. In 1374 he sent an envoy to the northern garrison city of Datong with such an overture.[92]

Like many other Great Yuan elites in the wake of Toghus-Temür's death, Nair-Buqa received visits from Ming envoys bearing edicts from Zhu Yuanzhang. The Ming emperor argued that men like Nair-Buqa should not feel bound by ties of loyalty to the fallen Great Yuan.[93] In 1375, Nair-Buqa seems to have briefly accepted a post in the Ming imperial military as vice-commander of Guanshan Garrison, which was established expressly

[89] Serruys, *Mongols in China*; Robinson, "Mongolian Migration," fns. 21, 23, and 25 (pp. 126–28).
[90] Also transcribed Nayir-Buqa. Kawagoe Yasuhiro (*Mindai Chūgoku no gigoku*, pp. 115–42) discusses Nair-Buqa.
[91] *MTZSL*, 85.8a, p. 1521.
[92] *MTZSL*, 92.7a–b, pp. 1613–14; *DMTZ*, 7.60a–b, vol. 2, pp. 273–74; *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 2b–3a (*MCKG*, vol. 3, pp. 1778–79).
[93] *GQ*, 9.1.699; 9.1.703.

for Nair-Buqa and his followers.[94] Little more than a year later, however, Nair-Buqa and his followers abandoned their allegiance to the Ming and returned to the steppe.[95] For the next four years, Ming sources are silent on his activities.

Late in 1380, he and another Great Yuan commander led a raiding party through Taolin Pass, and then seized captives, goods, and livestock in Yongping (today's Qinhuangdao City).[96] The raiding's scale and duration are unclear. In response, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered several senior commanders to organize a retaliatory expedition.[97] Nair-Buqa and his men quickly withdrew to the north without suffering serious losses.[98] Again the sources go cold. Only six years later in December 1387 does Nair-Buqa resurface in Ming records, which note that he and another Yuan commander, Qara-Jang, had been reported in the Qara-Qorum region. A senior Ming general sought and received permission to assemble a force "to extirpate" them.[99] Nair-Buqa survived the Ming attack. Slightly less than a year later, he was again active near the northern border. In October 1388, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the Shanxi and Beiping Regional Military Commissions to heighten military readiness against potential raiding, but once more we face a documentary void regarding Nair-Buqa's activities during the next sixteen months.[100]

The year 1390 would be a turning point in Nair-Buqa's life. In February 1390, Nair-Buqa was spotted along the northern Ming border; soldiers from Shanxi Province were mobilized in response. He apparently withdrew before the Ming could organize an effective military response.[101] Months later, the Ming emperor sent a Mongol in his service to determine the location of Nair-Buqa and the Great Yuan commander Yaozhu.[102] Zhu Yuanzhang appointed two of his sons to serve as aides-de-camp to a senior general in a high-profile expedition against the Yuan military commanders.[103] Less than a month later, Zhu Yuanzhang again sent a Mongol in his service to the steppe, this time carrying an imperial edict for Yaozhu, Nair-Buqa, and other Yuan commanders. The basic message was simple: Past attacks on Ming territory would not poison future relations. The Ming emperor urged Nair-Buqa to consider the

[94] *MTZSL*, 98.5b, p. 1678. Serruys (*Mongols in China*, pp. 217–18; "Location of the T'a-t'an," fn 12, pp. 53–54) notes that (a) Guanshan likely was a general geographical reference to the mountains west and northwest of Jining and east and northeast of Suiyuan and (b) that the establishment of a military unit (whether a chiliarchy or garrison) did not necessarily mean that surrendering Mongol populations relocated to that place. Serruys (*Mongols in China*, p. 226) documents that the 1370 chiliarchy was likely dismantled soon after its establishment.

[95] *MTZSL*, 105.7b, p. 1762.

[96] *MTZSL*, 134.4b–5a, pp. 2128–29.

[97] *MTZSL*, 135.1a, pp. 2137.

[98] *GCXZ*, 6.8a.

[99] *MTZSL*, 187.2a, p. 2799.

[100] *MTZSL*, 193.6a, pp. 2903.

[101] *Ming Taizu huangdi qinlu* (Chang Bide, pp. 76–77; Zhang Dexin, p. 87).

[102] *MTZSL*, 198.5a, p. 2975; *GQ*, 9.1.699.

[103] *MTZSL*, 199.1a, pp. 2981; *GQ*, 9.1.701; *MTZSL*, 201.5b, p. 3016.

example of Naghachu, who had killed "more than 200,000 imperial troops." When Naghachu surrendered in 1387, Zhu Yuanzhang continued, all his men had received generous rewards and posts in the Ming military. If Nair-Buqa were to submit, he and his followers would be granted good lands where they could live in peace, Zhu Yuanzhang promised.[104] One month later, in mid-March 1390, the Ming imperial army passed through Gubeikou Pass along the northern border (in today's Miyun County, in northeastern Beijing Municipality), beginning the march to the steppe.[105]

Weeks later in mid-April 1390, Nair-Buqa offered his submission to the Prince of Yan, the Ming forces' titular commander. His decision resulted from both military imperatives and Ming dynasty promises. First, the military imperatives. In the midst of a late spring snowstorm, Guantong, a Mongol serving as a Ming envoy, rode into Nair-Buqa's camp. Formerly an officer with the Great Yuan, Guantong had submitted to the Great Ming. His new duties included negotiations with Mongols. In 1387, several jittery Ming officers had injured Naghachu, who had only recently surrendered and was in their custody. His followers wanted revenge. As one of Naghachu's former officers, Guantong enjoyed enough trust and authority to defuse the explosive situation.[106] Now in April 1390, Nair-Buqa immediately recognized his long-lost friend. The two embraced tearfully. As they talked, however, Ming soldiers overran Nair-Buqa's unprepared camp, which had not anticipated a Ming attack in the midst of a blizzard. Nair-Buqa and his men hastily mounted their horses to escape. Counseling against flight, Nair-Buqa's old companion insisted that the Prince of Yan would treat them well.

Nair-Buqa met the prince. He decided that, given the circumstances, the smart choice was allegiance to the Great Ming.[107] Nair-Buqa brought with him a large following, including several hundred military commanders and between ten thousand and tens of thousands of men and women.[108] The decision had immediate consequences. The Ming state separated Nair-Buqa from many of his followers. Nair-Buqa watched as senior Ming commander, Fu Youde (1327–94), relocated his people southward to lands within Ming territory.[109] At the same time, Nair-Buqa and more than 200 of his military commanders traveled to the capital in Nanjing, likely escorted by heavily armed Ming soldiers.[110] In an audience at the imperial court, Nair-Buqa

[104] *DMTZ*, 6.3b–4b, vol. 2, pp. 68–70; *MTZSL*, 199.5b–6a, pp. 2990–91; *GQ*, 9.1.703.
[105] *MTZSL*, 200.4b–5a, pp. 3000–1; *GQ*, 9.1.704.
[106] *MTZSL*, 182.5b, p. 2748; 182.6a–b, pp. 2749–50.
[107] *MTZSL*, 200.6b–7a, pp. 3004–5; *GQ*, 9.1.705.
[108] *GCXZ*, 7.35a; *Feng tian jing nan shi ji*, pp. 3–4.
[109] *MTZSL*, 201.3a, p. 3011; *GQ*, 9.1.706; *GCXZ*, 7.35a.
[110] *MTZSL*, 201.3a, p. 3011. In July 1390, more than 700 households from among Nair-Buqa's followers were sent to Nanjing. See *MTZSL*, 202.6a, p. 3029. Each received a set of summer

promised loyalty to his new lord, Zhu Yuanzhang. Nair-Buqa offered physical evidence of the transfer of his allegiance. He presented symbols of authority issued by the Great Yuan court: his silver Grand Defender seal and three other silver seals, three gold tallies, eight silver tallies, five iron tallies, and twenty-eight written command orders.[111]

Two days later, Nair-Buqa accepted a post in the Ming military as a vice commander in the Middle Regency Garrison in the capital.[112] Another former Yuan commander who had surrendered along with Nair-Buqa, Arugh-Temür, similarly took a post as vice commander in one of the Prince of Yan's Escort Guards (the Yanshan Middle Garrison). They both received almost immediate promotions to the rank of commander.[113] Nair-Buqa won other tokens of the emperor's special recognition. A day after becoming an officer in the Ming imperial military, Nair-Buqa and seventy of his men each received a fully outfitted horse from the throne.[114] Little more than a week later, Nair-Buqa and 200 of his officers received a total of 13,600 taels of silver and 12,600 *ding* in cash.[115] To put this in perspective, the emperor had issued 720,675 *ding* of cash to the 124,000 men for their service during the 1390 campaign against Nair-Buqa. Each man received an average of 5.8 units of cash.[116] Nair-Buqa and his men received on average sixty-five units of cash (ten times as much) plus the gift of silver (an average of 5.5 lbs/2.5 kg per man).

Nair-Buqa understood that the price of status and wealth was military service. Early in March 1392, by the emperor's command, Nair-Buqa's military forces underwent inspection by the Beiping Regional Military Commission, which suggests that Nair-Buqa's followers had been settled in Beiping, that is, the region from the environs of today's Beijing to what was the Ming's northern border.[117] At the same time, Mongol officers from

clothes, but the *Ming Veritable Records* mentions no other supplies or accommodations for the relocated families. Serruys (*Mongols in China*, pp. 7–8) notes that with incorporation into the Ming polity, "all feudal relations between [Mongol] subject and lord strictly ceased to exist . . . Mongol subjects ceased to be the personal subjects of the nobles." However, Serruys (p. 111) also remarks, "we cannot escape the conclusion that on the whole Mongol troops were led and commanded by Mongol officers."

111 *MTZSL*, 201.3b, p. 3012.

112 *NCL* (p. 289) notes that Nair-Buqa's post was titular. Based on circumstantial evidence, Serruys (*Mongols in China*, p. 117) reaches a similar conclusion.

113 *MTZSL*, 201.3b, p. 3012; *GQ*, 9.1.706. Yaozhu was appointed as deputy censor-in-chief; Hügechi was appointed as Vice Minister of Works. At about this time, another Mongol already in the Prince of Yan's forces was granted a hereditary post as Assistant Commander in the prince's Escort Guard, Yanshan Middle Garrison, for his service as a guide in the expedition against Nair-Buqa. See *MTZSL*, 201.3b, p. 3012.

114 *MTZSL*, 201.4b, p. 3014.

115 *MTZSL*, 201.6a, p. 3017. The proportion of silver to cash seems strangely high. Four months later, the emperor again rewarded Nair-Buqa with cash and textiles. See *MTZSL*, 204.3a, p. 3055.

116 *MTZSL*, 201.5b, p. 3016.

117 *MTZSL*, 206.3a, p. 3181.

families that had been settled near Nanjing now traveled to Beiping, where they formed a Mongol contingent.[118] It is unknown whether Nair-Buqa commanded this unit. Slightly less than three weeks later, the emperor informed the Prince of Yan about the upcoming campaign's objective. "The steppe may have been subjugated, but the remaining northern horsemen live scattered across the steppe," observed the emperor. "If they assembled," he warned, "it would be disastrous." Zhu Yuanzhang told the Prince of Yan that he had already ordered between 6,000 and 10,000 cavalry troops from the Beiping Regional Military Commission and the prince's Escort Guards to join Nair-Buqa's men to form a single unit.[119] Using their familiarity with the steppe environment, Nair-Buqa and his men were to provide reconnaissance and act as guides to the Ming imperial forces. With such local expertise on his side, the Ming emperor felt confident that "there are bound to be many captives." Nair-Buqa and his men were presumably expected to help negotiate the Yuan surrender.[120]

The Ming forces traveled first to the Onon River and then to today's Uljă River/Uuldza Gol in Mongolia, which flows between the Onon and Kerülen Rivers.[121] At Mt. Chekcher, Ming troops took more than 500 captives.[122] They also seized livestock and "silver seals, maps, registers, and iron tallies inscribed with silver writing." All was transported to the capital for presentation to the throne. Two men among the 500 captives were selected to return north with a message urging the Mongol noble Ajashiri to submit (more on this in Chapter 5).[123]

Nothing is known of Nair-Buqa's experiences during this 1392 campaign into the Mongolian steppe. Although a proclamation of honors and awards for this kind of expedition was common, no such record is known to survive. In fact, sources are mute on Nair-Buqa until he reemerges dramatically one year later. In April 1393, rumors reached the Ming emperor that Nair-Buqa and Alugh-Temür were plotting treason. Zhu Yuanzhang noted that when the two men had submitted to the Great Ming, he had recognized their abilities and given them posts. "Now they turn against me," the emperor observed.[124]

A fortnight later, Zhu Yuanzhang sent senior commander Xu Da north to Beiping to inform the Prince of Yan of the conspiracy of Nair-Buqa and Alugh-Temür. Again, the emperor adopted an aggrieved tone, remarking that he had dealt with the two Mongols in good faith. "People say barbarians fear power and don't appreciate virtue. This is truly so." Zhu Yuanzhang ordered

[118] *MTZSL*, 206.3a, p. 3181. [119] *MTZSL*, 207.1b–2a, pp. 3188–89.
[120] *MTZSL*, 217.3b–4a, pp. 3188–89; *GQ*, 9.1.728.
[121] The Ming period Chinese transcription is Wuguerzhahe. See Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 52, fn. 56.
[122] I thank Christopher Atwood for the Mongol transcription.
[123] *MTZSL*, 220.2a, p. 3223; *GQ*, 9.1.732. [124] *MTZSL*, 225.2a, p. 3302.

his son to "preemptively escort" Nair-Buqa and Alugh-Temür to the capital. He further commanded the prince to be vigilant against betrayal by the Mongols' men.[125] The prince was to intensify drilling among his Escort Guard troops by having them wear armor and carry weapons when they went hunting as preparation for war. The emperor also recalled his senior commander Feng Sheng to the capital to review precautionary measures for dealing with other Mongol personnel serving in the Ming military. The emperor forbid the use of Mongols in future campaigns. Feng Sheng was to guard against Mongols stealing horses and deserting, for fear that they would divulge vital military information. Finally, he instructed that if Feng Sheng did need to use Mongol soldiers in combat against steppe Mongols, he should intermix them among Ming regulars. This presumably would reduce the likelihood of revolt.[126]

By late May 1393, Nair-Buqa and Alugh-Temür had been delivered to the capital, where they were executed.[127] The only surviving information about their alleged crimes appears in a fascinating and highly problematic source, *A Record of Treasonous Ministers*, compiled at Zhu Yuanzhang's orders in 1393.[128] *A Record* contains the testimonies of nearly 1,000 people implicated in one of the biggest political events of Zhu Yuanzhang's reign. The emperor insisted that senior Ming commander, Lan Yu, working in close conjunction with half a dozen merit nobles and a handful of civil ministers, had orchestrated a massive assassination plot. Scholars have long expressed doubts about the motives and scale of Lan Yu's treason; some question whether such a plot ever existed.[129] One explanation is that Zhu Yuanzhang fabricated the plot as a pretext to eliminate senior military figures and their supporters who might endanger the dynasty in the future. Previously in his reign, the emperor had used a similar stratagem to remove from power what he perceived as

[125] For similar measures, see Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 84–86.

[126] *DMTZ*, 4.3b, vol. 1, p. 414; *MTZSL*, 226.2a, pp. 3304–5.

[127] *MTZSL*, 227.2a, p. 3313; *GQ*, 10.1.742. See also Wang Shizhen, *Yan zhou shi liao*, 24.15b–17a. The same account appears in *GCXZ*, 5.15a.

[128] *Record*'s circulation during the Ming period is unclear. In his preface, Zhu Yuanzhang notes that he "published the work for distribution in the capital and beyond." However, Kwok ("Lun 'Li Shanchang'," p. 55, fn. 29) suggests that few Ming period writers knew of its existence. Chapter (*juan*) 3 of *A Record* appears under the title "Testimonies of the Lan Yu Faction" (*Lan Yu dang gongzhuang*) in *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan* (*shi*, vol. 13, pp. 1–42), a multivolume series of reprints of rare works held at the National Library of China. Based on line-by-line comparison, Kawagoe (*Mindai Chūgoku no gigoku*, pp. 50–51) suggests that the copy held at Beijing University (upon which the 1991 typeset edition is based) and the remnant held at the National Library of China represent two different manuscript traditions. See also Zhang Jingrui, *Mingshi jishi benmo*.

[129] Chen Wutong, *Hongwu*, pp. 560–92; Li Xinfeng, "Mingchu xungui"; Lin Fengjiang, "Zhu Yuanzhangshalu"; Liu Changjiang, "Lan Yu dang'an"; Lü Jinglin, "Lan Yu dang'an"; Wu and Zhu, "'Lan Yu dang'an'." Massey ("Chu Yüan-chang," pp. 230, 255) concludes that insufficient evidence precludes a conclusive answer about whether Lan Yu conspired against the throne but suggests Lan "had given rebellion very serious thought."

over-mighty senior civil officials who had developed extensive networks of supporters, which in the aggregate, controlled much of the imperial bureaucracy. Historians estimate that the emperor executed some 15,000 government officials, their families, and their friends in the bloody purge that followed the accusations against Lan Yu. *A Record* was intended to document illicit relationships that bound Lan Yu to thousands of military officers, civil officials, household servants, eunuchs, monks, and others through personal loyalty, self-interest, and community fears.[130] In *A Record*, the Mongols emerge as neither the leading nor numerically predominant group in the alleged treason plot. They were, however, a recognizable feature of the body politic.

Testimonies recount that Nair-Buqa first met Lan Yu on the steppe. To mark the occasion, Lan Yu ordered that cattle and horses be butchered for a celebratory feast. The event left a strong impression on Nair-Buqa. Years later he repeated the tale to other Mongols living in Nanjing who gathered at the home of Marquis of Shenyang to mark the marquis' birthday.[131] The marquis was the son of Naghachu, the powerful Great Yuan commander who had submitted to the Ming throne in 1387. Nair-Buqa contrasted those joyous days on the steppe with straitened circumstances in Nanjing. "His Majesty is deeply suspicious of us Mongols and has dispatched us to the four quarters of the realm," he observed. He worried what would become of the Mongols in the future. The marquis remarked that although he was now a noble in the Ming polity, life was better on the steppe as a common officer.[132] According to *A Record*, Nair-Buqa, the Marquis of Shenyang, and other Mongol officers in the Ming military became frequent guests of Lan Yu at his home in Nanjing. Lan Yu promised to restore Nair-Buqa and his other Mongol guests to the high status they had enjoyed on the steppe.[133] The man who reunited Nair-Buqa and Lan Yu was a commander in the Mongol Garrison of the Left, Fagū, who, if his name is an indication, may have been of Jurchen origin.[134]

Lan Yu had recruited Fagū to join his plot. During an assignment in Nanjing, Fagū sought out Lan Yu, who invited him to drink together. Lan Yu's pitch was straightforward. He began by pointing out that Ye Sheng, a merit noble related to him by marriage, had already been executed in a previous court purge. "We are all men who have accompanied His Majesty from youth and gave our all. Now we are dukes and marquises, but we are not safe. Who knows what will become of you Mongols and Central Asians? If you agree to follow me, you will have no fears about wealth and status."[135]

[130] Kwok ("Lun 'Li Shangchang'," pp. 59–60, 67, 69) argues that the now lost 1390 *Record of Exposing Treacherous Factions* (*Zhaoshi jiandang lu*) served a similar function, providing firm "evidence" for Li Shanchang's vast conspiracy.
[131] This was Chaghan. [132] *NCL*, p. 21. [133] *NCL*, p. 290.
[134] I thank Christopher Atwood for the transcription.
[135] *NCL*, p. 197. For similar articulation, see *NCL*, p. 289.

Fagū responded, "Your Eminence Regional Commander has been undefeated for many years. When the time comes, your servant will gather good men to help." *A Record* notes that Lan Yu then rewarded Fagū with a set of gold-embroidered robes.[136]

The same basic narrative figures in the testimonies of a dozen or so Mongol officers and eunuchs in the service of the Ming dynasty. They refer repeatedly to meetings with Nair-Buqa, Fagū, and the Marquis of Shenyang. *A Record* offers three basic motives for the Mongols' decision to join Lan Yu. The first is personal ties of loyalty, primarily to Lan Yu and secondarily to the Marquis of Shenyang. The second is fear or uncertainty. Given that the emperor had struck down even his most trusted companions, *A Record* notes again and again, what future could recently surrendered officers expect? The third is the Mongols' discontent with their present situation. Their testimonies repeatedly refer to the Ming dynasty's "harsh laws" and their previous status as senior officers or men of elite status.[137] The Mongols also unfavorably contrast the happiness of steppe life with conditions within the Ming polity. In one version of events, Fagū relays Lan Yu's promise to send the Mongols back (presumably the steppe), where they would "have good lives."[138] A final cause of discontent was their perception that the dynasty "treated them like outlaws."[139]

Given that the charges against Lan Yu were in part or even entirely trumped up, what can we conclude from confessions extracted to prove that he was a traitor? I propose that testimony was intended to be plausible in the eyes of the accused, interrogators, officials supervising the investigations, and ultimately Zhu Yuanzhang. The use of torture in such investigations was common. One well-known response to torture is to tell interrogators what they want to hear. Most testimonies in *A Record* include key words such as "plot" and "illicitly." Narrative details that men met regularly to plot or that they recruited many officers to join the conspiracy "prove" deliberate, treasonous behavior. Finally, confessions nearly always explain why men in the service of the Ming state betrayed the emperor. Thus, the Mongols' three primary motivations for treason identified in *A Record* – illicit allegiance, fear, and discontent – were presumably compelling in the judgment of contemporary audiences. *A Record* identifies Nair-Buqa and others as Mongol officers, Mongol soldiers, Mongol eunuchs, and "ordinary Mongols" suggesting that Mongols formed a recognizable feature of the early Ming political landscape. However, their motives and

[136] *NCL*, p. 197.
[137] Some Chinese officers noted the same unhappiness with the Ming's "harsh laws" as their reason to join Lan Yu. See *NCL*, pp. 257–58.
[138] *NCL*, p. 22. One Mongol eunuch (*NCL*, p. 299) reminisces about "running hounds and flying falcons," that is hunting, on the steppe.
[139] *NCL*, pp. 293, 294, 295.

actions closely resemble those of the hundreds and hundreds of other men described in *A Record*.

What do Nair-Buqa's experiences reveal about how Mongol elites negotiated issues of loyalty, service, and rulership during the late fourteenth century? In terms of political culture, Nair-Buqa's career shows that until at least 1390, Great Yuan leaders retained titles, seals, tallies, and orders issued by the Great Yuan court. Further, they understood that such emblems of authority were a valued political currency. Nair-Buqa's example also demonstrates that such leaders maintained large subordinate populations. It is tempting to conclude that when Ming sources refer to Nair-Buqa's 10,000 followers, they are describing a *tümen*, a military unit of 10,000 men that the Mongols had used extensively across Eurasia. Ten thousand in this case, however, may simply mean a big number. Nonetheless, Nair-Buqa commanded sufficient military resources to launch military raids on the northern Ming border and make incursions into northern prefectures.

If we shift our focus to interactions with the Ming, we might for convenience use incorporation into the Ming polity as a dividing line. While still based in the steppe, Nair-Buqa knew through personal experience – for instance his reunion with Guantong – that many Mongols, including the former Great Yuan elite, now served the Ming court as interpreters, envoys, and military commanders.[140] Nair-Buqa had also seen that military clashes with the Ming did not necessarily preclude better relations in the future. In fact, based on other Great Yuan commanders' relations with the Ming throne – Naghachu's example was likely on his mind – he may have concluded that demonstration of military prowess would secure advantageous terms for his eventual submission. In any case, he was fully aware that raiding was an essential tool to support his subordinate population.

Nair-Buqa's experience shows that to a certain point, integration into the Ming polity was provisional. In 1375, he accepted a post within the Ming military, as vice commander in a garrison specially established to incorporate his followers into the Ming dynasty.[141] Less than a year later, however, he reconsidered his position and returned to the steppe with his followers. Terming Nair-Buqa's action "a revolt," Ming sources provide no details about his decision. Nair-Buqa's decision was not an isolated instance. During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, other recently relocated Mongol communities also concluded that prospects beyond the Ming state were preferable

[140] On the Ming dynasty's use of Mongols as military men, bureaucrats (including interpreters), and envoys, see Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 89–120, 137–48, 150–58.

[141] The Ming dynasty regularly used military titles and military units to facilitate the integration of foreign populations. See Robinson, "Military Institutions Matter for Ming History," p. 316.

to life as an imperial subject.[142] Zhu Yuanzhang was keenly aware that recently surrendered Mongols suffered exploitation by Ming military personnel. He warned his officers that such abuses bred resentment and doubt among Mongols.[143]

Nair-Buqa's incorporation into the Ming polity meant substantial but not absolute change to himself and his people. One way to think about such changes is to compare political culture in the Ming dynasty and on the steppe. Service under Zhu Yuanzhang brought Nair-Buqa official ranks, personal tokens of recognition, and material support. At the same time, it entailed both the physical relocation of his people and the duty to campaign against dynastic enemies. He and his men were also subject to imperial discipline. For much of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, service under a Great Khan had meant much the same thing, often on a grander scale. Consider for instance the resettlement of steppe populations to far-flung places like Baghdad and Daidu or the extensive reorganization of lineages to better meet the Great Khan's needs. Yet, Great Yuan commanders had not experienced strong imperial will since the mid-fourteenth century.[144] In fact, men like Nair-Buqa had probably never been subject to any form of sustained central control. We might focus on the shift from service under a Mongol Great Khan to a Chinese emperor. Equally salient is the change from an environment of high levels of individual and community autonomy to a more closely disciplined regime under an activist ruler.

A second dimension of political culture to consider is comparative stability. It is something of a truism that by the 1390s, the Mongolian steppe was chaotic. The Great Khan's authority and power had weakened; competition among a broader range of contenders had intensified. Such an impression reflects in part our principal sources' perspectives. Ming period records often assume that the collapse of a strong political center inevitably breeds chaos and strife. During these decades, the steppe was no doubt volatile, but early Ming dynastic politics were no garden party. Putting aside for the moment the destructive succession crisis of 1398–1402 that devastated much of northern China, Zhu Yuanzhang's reign witnessed repeated sanguinary purges. Both civil officials and military officers confronted the real threat of public

[142] Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 242–43. Sinor ("Acquisition, Legitimation," p. 54) notes the limitations of steppe rulers "over evasive populations seeking and finding refuge beyond the constraints of imposed statehood." See also Serruys, "Were the Ming against the Mongols' Settling?" pp. 136, 138, 150.

[143] *DMTZ*, 3.27a, vol. 1, p. 357.

[144] Melville ("End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 310) suggests that a months-long gap between Ilhkan Sultan Öljeitü's death and the enthronement of his successor Abū Sa'īd in 1317 can be explained by senior military commanders' equanimity with "the absence of a restraining authority."

humiliation, imprisonment, exile, physical torture, and death. In extreme cases, Zhu Yuanzhang executed his officials' family members, friends, and colleagues.

Nair-Buqa met his end in spring 1393. Just one month earlier, Zhu Yuanzhang executed the senior commander Lan Yu.[145] In 1394 and 1395, other prominent military leaders such as Fu Youde, Wang Bi, and Feng Sheng were driven to commit suicide.[146] The status of Nair-Buqa, Arigh-Temür, and others – as recent subjects of foreign birth – differed from that of Lan Yu, Fu Youde, Wang Bi, and Feng Sheng as senior generals with decades of dynastic service and personal ties to the emperor. However, they were all subject to the omnipresent threat of an abrupt, catastrophic turn of fortune under a mercurial sovereign.[147] For Nair-Buqa, service in the Ming dynasty likely felt just as precarious and violent (if not more so) as steppe politics' more familiar rhythms.

Conclusions

Let us return briefly to Qara-Qorum's deteriorating road conditions in the fourteenth century. Decades ago, Henry Serruys remarked, "many Mongols and Central or Western Asiatic allies had been born in China, lived their lives in China, and had never known anything but China."[148] In their absence, indeed in part because of their absence, Mongolia, the birthplace of Chinggis and his empire, grew marginalized, at least economically.[149] By no later than 1300, poverty spread among steppe herdsmen.[150] The Yuan state subsidized Mongolia by redistributing grain and other foodstuffs from Koryŏ, Liaoyang, and parts of north China.[151] The state also drew on the economic resources of affluent southern and eastern China to ameliorate conditions in Mongolia. However, the Yuan court prioritized control of major political centers such as Daidu, salt-producing regions in today's Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and strategic

[145] *MTZSL*, 225.2b–3a; *GQ*, 10.1.739. Chapter 6 discusses Lan Yu's fall in the context of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative.

[146] On Fu Youde's death, see *MTZSL*, 235.4a, p. 3435; *GQ*, 10.1.752. On Wang Bi's death, see *MTZSL*, 235.5b, p. 3438; *GQ*, 10.1.754. For Feng Sheng's death, see *MTZSL*, 236.3a–5a, pp. 3447–51; *GQ*, 10.1.755. Whereas the *Ming Veritable Records* notes tersely that Fu, Wang, and Feng "died," Tan Qian explicitly remarks that they "committed suicide."

[147] Kawagoe (*Mindai Chūgoku no gigoku*, pp. 139–40) suggests, without evidence, that Nair-Buqa's execution on charges of treason led to a sense of crisis among Mongolian communities within the Ming dynasty and the removal of Mongolian personnel from the Ming military.

[148] Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 33.

[149] Dardess ("Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty," pp. 128–32) dates the end of Mongolia as an imperial center to 1260–64.

[150] Yi Kaesŏk, "14 segi ch'o makpuk."

[151] Political crises such as the 1328 War of the Two Capitals exacerbated long-term poverty on the steppe. See Chen Gaohua, "Yuandai de liumin," pp. 138–39, 141–42.

cities on the Grand Canal like Gaoyou. The steppe was usually a secondary consideration. Qara-Qorum's roads went unrepaired.

This trend explains why one scholar describes the Mongolian steppe as a "half-forgotten region" during the period of empire.[152] Control of steppe lands and peoples no longer was the central focus of the Great Khan in Daidu. For Golden Horde and Ilkhanate rulers, the Mongolian steppe was an even more distant concern. The flow of people and goods into the steppe slowed after the mid-fourteenth century. To be a Chinggisid in particular or Mongolian in general, no longer necessarily meant to live in the steppe. As Chapter 1 shows, the Mongol empire created a diaspora that drew tens of thousands of Mongols out of the steppe. From the most exalted noble lineages like the Borjigids to humble herdsmen, generations of Mongols had made their homes in places like today's Beijing, Xi'an, Dali (in today's Yunnan Province to the southwest), Gansu, and Liaodong as well as the "heartlands" of China, such as Henan Province. Others settled in even more distant urban centers such as today's Samarqand, Tabriz, Damascus, and Cairo.

Thus, when the Great Yuan court abandoned Daidu to seek restoration in the north, it was returning to a place transformed by the imperial enterprise. The last two chapters have tried to recast the story of the Great Yuan court in the decades from 1368 to 1398 by highlighting connections to the Mongol empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. The objective of such a retelling is threefold. First, it attempts to bring the Great Yuan court out of the long shadow of the Ming dynasty's towering historiographical edifice. Second, I hope the chapter has given some sense of the ways the Great Yuan court sought to come to terms with the legacy of the Mongol empire in general and the House of Qubilai in particular. Reconstruction of the Great Yuan court during these decades is complicated by both sparse sources and the fact that the most numerous and detailed materials often come from the Great Yuan's greatest rival. Third, a more historically grounded understanding of the Great Yuan deepens understanding of the Ming court and its Chinggisid narrative.

Documentary evidence and archeological materials show that the Great Yuan court retained key elements of an imperial court in the decades after Daidu's fall. It sought refuge in imperial and princely capitals on the steppe. It issued metal seals of office bearing Chinese-style military and civilian titles inscribed with Sinitic characters and the Pakpa script. It proclaimed reign titles, calendars, and posthumous Sinitic titles for its rulers. It convinced close allies to observe Yuan court protocol, including the adoption of hats and gowns, and to adopt important symbols of political allegiance. It regularly announced plans to retake lost territory and revive dynastic glory. That the Mongolian

[152] Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, p. 113.

ruling elite had adopted these facets of political culture from Kitan, Jurchen, Uyghur, and Chinese practises as well as earlier Turkic traditions in no way diminished their value. They were all resources broadly shared among contemporary Eurasian political elites that the Great Yuan court marshaled to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Some facets of the Great Yuan court during these decades are far murkier. Toghus-Temür's murder in 1388 sparked a crisis but its nature is unclear. Our primary witness, a noble at Toghus-Temür's court, tells us that all righteous men rejected Yisüder as a treacherous opportunist who murdered the rightful Great Khan. This account comes to us through materials compiled at the Ming court. In contrast, Timurid sources suggest an entirely different tale: Both Yisüder and his successor and son Engke gained Mongols' recognition as rightful Great Khans. In either case, eligibility to become Great Khan expanded beyond descendants of Qubilai or even the House of Tolui. If one wished to highlight connections to earlier times, one might argue that the succession pool had come to resemble the situation in the mid-thirteenth century, when Ögödeid candidates vied with Toluid candidates and Tolui's descendants contended among themselves.

Yet, the differences with earlier periods are also striking. In terms of their relative status among Mongolian elites, the Great Khans of the late fourteenth century were much diminished. Even more noteworthy was the reduced power and reach of the Great Mongol Empire, whose people was now largely restricted to a volatile and fissiparous steppe. In its stead, the Great Ming emperor became lord and patron to tens of thousands of Mongols.

These two chapters have focused on Great Yuan emperors and their courts. However, without their ability to draw on the resources of regional bases of support, Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and Toghus-Temür would have mattered far less on the broader Eurasian stage. The next chapter examines the only example of Great Yuan regional governance for which documentary evidence survives, Black City.

4 Black City

It is easy to forget that Qara-Qoto, Mongolian for "Black City," was once a vibrant oasis city.[1] Located in today's Ejin Banner, Alashan League, in western Inner Mongolia, Qara-Qoto is more than 930 miles (1,500 km) from Beijing and nearly 1,550 miles (2,500 km) from the early Ming capital of Nanjing. Ming period sources often depict Qara-Qoto as a lonely outpost tottering precariously at civilization's edge. The city was reputedly abandoned early in the fifteenth century. This image of a lost city only deepened over time. When Russian archeologists arrived in 1908, Qara-Qoto was buried under tons of fine, wind-blown sand. It was a forgotten ruin far from major urban centers. Archeologists excavated a rich cache of art objects and written documents. They found more than 2,000 books, scrolls, and letters. A follow-up expedition in 1909 revealed a buried Buddhist stupa, Buddhist statues, wall paintings, bronze seals, and thousands of documents written in the Tangut, Chinese, Uyghur, and Mongolian languages. These texts varied from Buddhist sutras and incantations to land contracts, tax records, and from requisitions for fodder, grain, and pack animals to provision armies. The Russians transported a portion of their discoveries back home, where they became a permanent part of the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg.[2] During the next two decades, several other European expeditions (perhaps most famous among them being Sir Aurel Stein's 1913–19 Central Asian expedition) excavated at Qara-Qoto, compiled maps, and surveyed the ruins of watchtowers and fortresses.[3] The materials that Stein collected found homes in the British Museum and later the British Library in London. In 1983–84, an Inner Mongolian team conducted further excavations at Qara-Qoto, uncovering thousands of additional texts, seals, and pieces of religious art, most of which are now held in Hohhot.[4]

[1] Also known by its Tangut name, Etzina (Chinese transcription Yijinai), meaning "Black River," and Heishuicheng, City of Black Waters (or River).

[2] For the Russian expeditions led by Pyotr Kuzmich Kozlov, see E. I. Kychanov, "Preface" (translated by Ruth Dunnell), pp. 1–25; "Qianyan" (Chinese translation), in *EHWX*, vol. 1, pp. 1–17; Kira Samosyuk, "Preface," pp. 85–92; "Xuyan," pp. 11–22, *HSCYSP*, vol. 1, pp. 85–92.

[3] Stein, *Sir Aurel Stein's Central Asia*, vol. 1, pp. 435–506.

[4] *HCW*.

Map 4.1 Distances from Nanjing

Material from Stein's expeditions was published more than half a century ago, but only recently have texts held in Saint Petersburg and Hohhot been made available in oversized volumes that include photographs, transcriptions, and detailed physical descriptions. With wider accessibility of such materials, specialists in a variety of fields and time periods have begun the painstaking process of deciphering individual texts and investigating technical issues such as accounting protocols and chancellery practices. These materials include more than 4,000 documents from the Yuan period. Eighteen items date from the years 1368–72.[5] They vary from well-preserved documents to fragments with just a few characters. Often the handwriting is nearly illegible. One scholar enthuses that the bountiful Qara-Qoto primary documents will transform our understanding of the Yuan period.[6] Time will tell about that prophecy, but the materials do shed invaluable light on a time and place that is otherwise poorly understood.

Even at this preliminary state of research, the Qara-Qoto documents make clear two points. First, they reveal with unparalleled detail that Great Yuan regional governance continued to function after Daidu's fall. The Qara-Qoto documents remind us that after 1368 the Great Yuan was more than a steppe army or the Great Khan's camp. Great Yuan regional administrators carried on with the business of government; they collected taxes, delivered supplies, and adjudicated legal cases. Bureaucrats and clerks produced written documents that observed standardized chancellery protocol. These documents circulated among government bureaus, which were variously located in Qara-Qoto or more distantly in places like Ganzhou. Based on the outcome, local government implemented political, economic, military, and social policies.

Second, the Qara-Qoto documents show that exclusive reliance on Ming dynasty sources distorts understanding of the Great Yuan. Extant materials produced at the early Ming court regularly refer to the Great Yuan but provide few details of Yuan governance after Daidu's fall. Additionally, Ming dynastic sources largely focus on developments in eastern Mongolia, most especially the Great Khan's court. Other parts of the Great Yuan, such as Qara-Qoto, Hami, or Kunming, appear far less commonly in materials produced at Nanjing (and later Beijing).[7] Such incomplete and often inaccurate accounts give the impression that after 1368 the Great Yuan dynasty consisted of a rump court

[5] Du Lihui, "Heishuicheng Yuandai Hanwen," p. 118; Du Lihui et al., *Heishuicheng Yuandai Hanwen junzheng*, pp. 3–4. Chen Chaohui ("Heishuicheng chutu Bei Yuan") provides the titles of the eighteen documents. Three are from 1369, six from 1370, four from 1371, and five from 1372.

[6] Zhang Haijuan, "Heishuicheng wenxian."

[7] As Sugiyama ("Bin-ō Chūbei," p. 243) notes, chapter 107 of *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*, which presents in table form a Chinggisid genealogy, suffers from omissions and inaccuracies.

surrounding the Great Khans, Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and Toghus-Temür, on the one hand, and military commanders such as Köke-Temür and Naghachu at the northwestern and northeastern edges of Ming territory on the other. Acknowledgment of Great Yuan regional government ran counter to Zhu Yuanzhang's objective of marginalizing the Great Yuan as a functioning dynasty. Thus, the Qara-Qoto documents make clear the dangers of uncritically adopting the Ming court's perspectives and objectives when trying to understand the Great Yuan. Or, to views things differently, the Qara-Qoto documents remind us of the Ming court's success in controlling the Great Yuan's story.

This chapter and Chapter 8 ("South of the Clouds") pursue two overarching lines of inquiry. First, they explore the governance and political dynamics of Great Yuan territories beyond the central court in the late fourteenth century. In the decades following Daidu's fall, such territories retained varying degrees of allegiance to the Great Yuan court. They used the Great Yuan calendar and preserved Great Yuan administrative structures. They received orders from the Great Khan and periodically offered military and material support. Ties of blood and family tradition of service to the Chinggisid ruling house also bound them to the Great Yuan. At the same, Qara-Qoto, Yunnan, Liaodong, Hami and elsewhere operated with considerable autonomy. The nature of their allegiance to the Great Yuan court varied according to time, region, and circumstances. Due to the extreme paucity of surviving documents, details of their relation are often elusive. However, they were an integral part of what might be called the "greater Great Yuan."

Second, these chapters, especially Chapter 8, examine how the Ming court tailored its Chinggisid narrative to local conditions. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors developed talking points to describe the Great Yuan's rise, fall, and contemporary relevance. They also highlighted particular facets of the Mongols' story that they felt would resonate strongly with a specific target audience at a precise moment in time. These chapters argue that the early Ming court understood that even within a single segment of the Great Yuan, perceptions of the Mongol empire could vary by political interest. In other words, Zhu Yuanzhang tailored his Chinggisid narrative to his audience.

These two lines of analysis in turn bring two more general points into sharp focus. First, during the Ming dynasty's formative decades, Great Yuan rule stretched across varied physical, political, and cultural environments. It was more than a steppe regime. The following snippet nicely captures the Ming court's appreciation of the Great Yuan's daunting span. When explaining his strategy for the 1370 campaign against the Great Yuan, Zhu Yuanzhang described the rationale for his three-prong attack against the northeast (Liaodong), central Mongolia (Qara-Qorum), and the west (Gansu). He wanted

to make various elements of the Great Yuan "each focus on saving itself without having time to help each other."[8]

Second, the diversity of Great Yuan affiliated territories challenged the Ming court's ability to gather accurate, up-to-date information. Part of the difficulty stemmed from physical distances. East to west from today's Shenyang to Turpan (in today's eastern Xinjiang) is roughly 2,230 miles (3,600 km) – or about the distance from Boston to Salt Lake City; north to south from Qara-Qoto to Kunming is approximately 1,740 miles (2,800 km) – or slightly longer than the distance between Montreal and Miami (**see Map 4.1**). Even more challenging was the task of parsing the history of Mongol conquest in those regions, deciphering the nature of Mongol governance in each place, and understanding how the tumultuous conditions of the mid- to late fourteenth century had shaped (and continued to reshape) dynamics of local power holding. Only after clearing these informational hurdles could the Ming court hope to maximize its Chinggisid narrative's efficacy – addressing both common themes that resonated broadly across the entire Great Yuan and specific issues important to individual actors.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section briefly examines Mongol governance in Qara-Qoto from the early thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries. The second section explores Great Yuan governance in Qara-Qoto in the decades after Daidu's fall. The third section traces relative levels of control of the Great Yuan and Ming courts in Qara-Qoto specifically and Gansu more broadly, during the late fourteenth century.

Qara-Qoto under Mongol Rule

The following section sketches in broad strokes Qara-Qoto's broader strategic significance for the Mongol empire, which prepares the way for brief discussion of key elements of Mongol governance. Review of the better understood early thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries allows clearer appreciation of more sparsely documented developments in Great Yuan regional governance after Daidu's fall.

For the Mongols, Qara-Qoto was a critical transportation hub in the Hexi Corridor. Along an east-west axis, it linked the Chinese hinterlands to Tibet and Central Asia. Along a north-south axis, it connected the Mongolian steppe to oasis cities and agrarian territories.[9] In 1226, the Mongols had seized Qara-Qoto as part of the wider campaign against the Tangut Xi Xia dynasty.[10] Under the Xi Xia, Qara-Qoto had been an important northern border garrison

[8] See *MTZSL*, 48.1a–b, pp. 947–48. [9] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuan Gansu xingsheng."
[10] Dunnell, "Locating the Tangut Military Establishment," p. 226.

connected through relay stations to the rest of the Tangut realm.[11] As the Mongols brought more regions into closer interaction through conquest and alliances, Qara-Qoto's importance increased. The Mongols' interest in Qara-Qoto was closely tied to strategic calculations. In 1260–64, Qubilai battled for control of the Mongol empire with his brother, Arig-Böke, whose power base was in the steppe. For Qubilai's armies, Qara-Qoto was an assembly point where they stocked up on provisions before advancing to the steppe.[12] Decades later in 1300 and 1315 when Qubilai's successors clashed with powerful Chaghadaid and Ögödeid leaders in Central Asia, Qara-Qoto again was a vital supply depot.[13] The Yuan dynasty developed Qara-Qoto's agricultural base, relocating farmers to work its fields, expanding its irrigation infrastructure (mainly canals fed by the Etsin River), and establishing a Directorate-General to supervise its operations.[14] In addition, the Yuan state enhanced transportation infrastructure to move more fodder, grain, and other military supplies from nearby localities like Ningxia. In military operations, the Yuan dynasty used both merchants and state agents to deliver grain.[15]

The Directorate-General also maintained relay stations, which not only moved government personnel and documents but also facilitated trade and commerce.[16] Document fragments from Qara-Qoto give a sense of how integral relay stations were to Great Yuan governance.[17] They touch on everything from the construction of relay stations and the purchase of horses and camels for use in transportation to the cost of rice, noodles, and sheep (presumably to feed guests who were traveling on government business), finances related to state production of alcohol (for consumption by those who used the relay facilities), and the registration of guests. The last surviving paperwork related to relay stations dates to 1370.[18]

[11] Satō Takayasu, "Xi Xia moqi Heishuicheng." Dunnell ("Locating the Tangut Military Establishment," p. 225) calls it one of "the Tanguts' two most important northern outposts . . . facing the Gobi."

[12] Dardess, "Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty," pp. 144–46.

[13] Cong Haiping, "*Heicheng chutu wenshu* suojian Haidu." In the 1280s, Qubilai expanded the relay system to better link North China to Besh-baliq via the Hexi corridor. See Chen Gaohua, "Yuandai Xinjiang," p. 327.

[14] *YS*, 13.2.278; 14.2.285; 14.2.300; 15.2.312; 60.5.1451. "Tuntian," "Zhengdian,"*Jing shi da dian xu lu*, *Guo chao wen lei*, 41.67a (*YYZH*, vol. 90, p. 393). For irrigation in Qara-Qoto and related documents, see Kong and Zhang, "Heishuicheng wenshu suojian Yuandai," pp. 190–92.

[15] Yang and Zhang, "Menggu Binwang jiazu yu Yuandai Yijinai," pp. 455–61.

[16] Chen Gaohua, "Heicheng Yuandai zhanchi."

[17] For the relay system's importance for the Mongol empire, see Shim, "Postal Roads."

[18] [M1 0860] (F197: W26], *ZHW*, vol. 5, p. 1083. For other examples, see vol. 5, pp. 1084–1134, 1137–99. For Yuan period documents setting daily allowances of noodles, wine, rice, and meat for officials of different ranks, see [TK204], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 208; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 419–20; [TK248] *EHWX*, vol. 4, pp. 313–15; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 486–92. Yang Yinmin ("Yuandai guanfu zhiying jiupin") discusses the costs of wheat used in alcohol production, accounting, and money lending.

Imposing earthen walls protected the Qara-Qoto, which encompassed approximately forty acres. Writing in the early twentieth century, Stein observed:

> At a point nearly two miles from Adūna-kōra we first sighted the high walls of *Khara-khoto* … across a dry river-bed edged on the west by a belt of low tamarisk cones. It was a striking sight, the most impressive perhaps that I had ever seen on a true desert ground, this dead town, with massive walls and bastions for the most part still in fair preservation, rising above the bare gravel flat which stretches toward it from the river bank.[19]

Just as its doughty city walls reflected Qara-Qoto's strategic importance, generations of Chinggisid nobles dispatched to govern Qara-Qoto and former Tangut territory testify to the region's status within the Mongolian empire. In 1229, Chinggis Khan's son and successor, Ögödei, apportioned lands in Xiliang to his own son, Köden (1206–51).[20] Even after the Toluids' rise in the mid-thirteenth century, Ögödeid princes remained visible in the region. During the protracted conflict with Qaidu, a group of Chaghadaid princes sided with Qubilai. To secure their allegiance and military service, Qubilai granted them considerable lands and extensive authority in local governance in the Hexi Corridor region.[21] Among the most prominent of such aristocrats was the House of the Prince of Bin, a Chaghadaid family that had transferred its allegiance to Qubilai sometime between 1276 and 1281.[22] As was true elsewhere in the Mongol empire, princely houses in Hexi maintained their own private military guards, commanded troops during imperial military campaigns, and ran their own relay stations.[23] To manage their extensive personnel and financial assets, princely houses often established administrative offices. Qubilai and later Great Khans periodically attempted to curb abuses of power, but noble families remained integral to Great Yuan regional governance.

Only partially documented in *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*, the presence of such nobles on the local scene can be further reconstructed from surviving Qara-Qoto documents. These nobles appear most frequently in the context of interaction with the Great Yuan state, most especially as consumers of state resources. We read of the Prince of Ningsu, Great Prince Ariq-Buqa, Great Prince Sanggashiri, Great Prince Bandishriga, consorts Bulughan and Natong, and unnamed "princes, consorts, and imperial-in-laws."[24] Nearly a

[19] Stein, *Sir Aurel Stein's Central Asia*, vol. 1, p. 437.
[20] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuandai Hexi zhuwang," p. 70.
[21] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuandai Hexi zhuwang," pp. 71–72. Other prominent Chaghadaid princes included the Prince of Xining, the Wuwei Prince of Xining, and the Prince of Su.
[22] Sugiyama, "Futatsu," p. 298. [23] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuandai Hexi zhuwang," pp. 72–74.
[24] My thanks to Christopher Atwood for transcriptions. He suggests that Natong is likely a Jurchen name.

dozen surviving lists detail supplies that their households received from local governments.[25] Other documents reflect these nobles' regular use of the relay stations and their resources. Dominant noble houses such as the House of Bin and the House of Jing maintained relay stations for their own use but demanded local administrative authorities to contribute funds and grains for their upkeep.[26] Nobles similarly expected state resources for their personal guards' maintenance. A 1359 quarterly report from a granary to the Qara-Qoto Directorate-General shows the disbursement of two varieties of wheat to feed troops stationed in Qara-Qoto under the command of a Dorjibal, who was likely the Prince of Anding.[27]

Beginning no later than 1261, Qubilai introduced more bureaucratic institutions such as the Branch Secretariat of Gansu to carry out the Yuan court's orders.[28] As was true elsewhere, branch secretariats were intended simultaneously to improve local governance, extend the central court's influence (including the extraction of resources), and check noble power. In addition, bureaus to facilitate the administration of grain relief, grain and tax transportation, and military supplies were introduced in other places in Gansu such as Ganzhou. The Yuan state created Directorates-General and Myriarchies not only in Qara-Qoto, as noted, but also elsewhere in the region, including Ganzhou, Ningxia, and Shazhou-Guazhou.[29] Tensions between Branch Secretariat officials and Chinggisid nobles surfaced from time to time, usually over issues of resource allocation or perceived slights to Chinggisid honor. However, the Branch Secretariat and Chinggisid nobles remained part of Great Yuan regional governance after Daidu's fall.

Because of its location on relay routes and its enhanced agricultural productivity, during the latter half of the thirteenth century and early fourteenth centuries, Qara-Qoto had been a thriving, modestly sized trade city. Preliminary archeological investigation suggests that the main boulevard measured

[25] See [M1 0426/F26:101], *ZHW*, vol. 3, p. 523; *ZHW*, vol. 3, p. 537; [M1.0453/F2:W51], *ZHW*, vol. 3, p. 546; [M1.0443/F20.W57], *ZHW*, vol. 3, p. 536; 1317" [M1 0470/F116:W595], *ZHW*, vol. 3, 565-607; 1317 [M1 0488/F116:W367], vol. 3, pp. 611–23; 1342 [M1 0503/F116:W496], *ZHW*, vol. 3, p. 629–44. Zhang Xiaofeng ["Heishuicheng wenshu"] argues that the Prince of Ningsu was a Chaghadaid line that held lands and troops in Qara-Qoto. Thirteen Qara-Qoto documents mention a total of three Princes of Ningsu. Zhang suggests all held the title in the fourteenth century. The last attested Prince of Ningsu died sometime between 1351 and 1359. In his examination of two registration ledgers excavated in Qara-Qoto, Chen Gaohua ("Heicheng Yuandai zhanchi") mentions nearly a dozen Mongol nobles.

[26] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuan Gansu xingsheng," pp. 44–46.

[27] Chen Ruiqing, "Heishuicheng Yuandai wenxian," p. 114.

[28] In 1261, Qubilai established the Zhongxing Branch Secretariat, a forerunner to the Gansu Branch Secretariat. See Yang and Zhang, "Menggu Binwang jiazu yu Yuandai Yijinai," p. 457.

[29] He Xiaoping, "Yuandai Hexi zhuwang," p. 71.

approximately 300 meters in length.[30] In the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo wrote that the city was rich in camels and cattle, lanner and saker falcons. He notes, "the people live by agriculture and stock-rearing; they are not traders." However, he also observes that travelers leaving the city must "take in a forty days' stock of provisions" until they reach the next city, Qara-Qorum.[31] Even if Qara-Qoto's residents did not count as traders in Polo's eyes, the city did a brisk trade in provisioning travelers between Uighuristan and Qara-Qorum, and between Qara-Qorum and Daidu.[32] One 1362 Qara-Qoto document refers to a Huihui merchant who traded in both "Huihui lands" and "the Tatar lands of Lingbei." In Yuan period documents, Huihui was often a generic reference to "Westerners," that is, those hailing from west of China.[33] Lingbei ("north of the peaks") here likely means the Yuan administrative zone corresponding roughly to the Mongolian steppe.[34]

Another reflection of trade was the presence of least one mosque and no less than nine Buddhist monasteries in the small city.[35] One 1334 document mentions a Muslim Bureau (*Qadi si*) staffed by a cleric (Per. Dānishmand; M. *dasman*) who was responsible for the local Muslim population. The position survived until at least 1362.[36] In addition to the Buddhist and Muslim communities, materials related to a Confucian academy and Daoist calendars and prognostication books have been excavated at Qara-Qoto.[37] Another reflection of cultural diversity is language. One recent collection of Qara-Qoto documents held in the Cultural Relics and Archeological Research Institute of Inner Mongola in Hohhot includes eighty-five Mongolian documents written at least in part with the Uyghur script and fifty-three in the Pakpa script. Some of these are printed Buddhist works translated into Mongolian.[38] Qara-Qoto's inhabitants included descendants of Xi Xia subjects (a composite group), Uyghurs, Mongols, Chinese, and Tibetans.

[30] Kong and Zhang, "Heishuicheng wenshu suojian Yuandai," p. 193. They cite Li Yiyou's *Heicheng chutu*, p. 21.

[31] Marco Polo, *The Travels*, p. 92. Kong and Zhang ("Heishucheng wenshu suojian Yuandai," p. 191) estimate that farming was the primary occupation of 60% of Qara-Qoto's inhabitants.

[32] At Qara-Qoto, Kozlov discovered a Mongolian loan contract for wheat, which is translated and annotated by Cleaves ("Early Mongolian Loan Contract"). Oyunbilig ("Yifen Heishuicheng") has translated what he thinks is a fourteenth-century loan contract for wheat into Chinese.

[33] Atwood, "Buddhists as Natives," pp. 304–5, fn. 62.

[34] Kong and Zhang, "Heishuicheng wenshu suojian Yuandai," p. 193.

[35] Kong and Zhang, "Heishuicheng wenshu suojian Yuandai," p. 193. For Buddhism and Islam as religions of affluent urban traders, see Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, pp. 9–55, esp. 9–25. Marco Polo (*The Travels*, 1959 Penguin edition, p. 61) describes Qara-Qoto's inhabitants as Buddhist ("idolaters").

[36] Qiu Shusen, "Cong Heicheng chutu wenshu," pp. 157–58; Chen Wei, "Yuandai Yijinailu Yisilan shehui."

[37] Chen Guang'en, "Heishuicheng chutu Daojiao"; Zhang Hongying, "Heishuicheng wenshu suojian jiceng Kongzi."

[38] *Zhongguo cang Heishuicheng minzu wenzi wenxian*.

In a word, Qara-Qoto was a cosmopolitan and strategic city linking important parts of the Mongol empire. In 1355, the most powerful minister at the Yuan court, Toqto'a (1314–56) fell from grace. The Yuan throne exiled him to Qara-Qoto.[39] It was considered distant from the capital but still under firm imperial control.

Great Yuan Regional Governance after Daidu's Fall

Qara-Qoto is useful for understanding the changes of the late fourteenth century in two ways. First, as mentioned, the documents preserved there serve as a rare window onto Yuan regional administration in the post-1368 period. Second, during the tumultuous 1360s and 1370s, control of Qara-Qoto in particular and the Hexi Corridor in general held strategic interest for both the Great Yuan and Great Ming courts. Under the Mongol empire, Qara-Qoto was a transportation node linking China to the steppe and to Central Asia. In the late fourteenth century, no single ruling house exercised uncontested control of the region. Qara-Qoto's future was unclear.

After Toghan-Temür's court withdrew to the steppe in 1368, Yuan administration persisted for decades in many regions along the border of northern China and the southern steppe. In fact, if one looked only at the Qara-Qoto cache of documents, one might not even realize that Daidu had fallen. Officials were reassigned, animals requisitioned, and goods redistributed.[40] One 1371 document shows us local administration processing a legal case related to theft.[41] Another document from the same year reveals authorities adjudicating a case involving the illegal seizure of slaves.[42] A locally published work on famine relief excavated at Qara-Qoto may date from this period.[43]

Three fragments from 1370 and 1373 record communications between the Qara-Qoto Sub-secretariat and the Gansu Branch Secretariat, its immediate administrative superior. The administrative offices of Gansu Branch Secretariat were located in Ganzhou, today's Zhangye City in Gansu Province, almost due south of Qara-Qoto. Writing in the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo described it as a "large and splendid city" with Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian communities.[44] Today to drive between the two places, separated by about 370 miles (600 km) of highway, takes approximately twelve hours. During the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo wrote that it was a ride of

[39] *YS*, 44.3.922; *YS*, 138.11.3348. Toqto'a committed suicide before leaving for Qara-Qoto.
[40] [TK 204V], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 421–22; Ma Shunping, "Bei Yuan 'Xuanguang'."
[41] [M1–0578/HF193B], *ZHW*, vol. 4, p. 716. [42] [M1–0543/T9:W3], *ZHW*, vol. 4, p. 675.
[43] Hu Guangrui, "Zaikao Heicheng suochu F116."
[44] Marco Polo, *The Travels* (1959 Penguin edition), p. 60.

twelve days.[45] Arrayed along the Black River were at least five relay stations connecting Qara-Qoto and Ganzhou.[46] That documents moved across such distances suggests that basic transportation infrastructure, that is, the relay system, continued to function. Officials in both Qara-Qoto and Ganzhou presumably believed there was a reasonable chance that paperwork would be read and acted on.

Other documents capture humdrum but essential dimensions of governance. A 1370 document recounts that Qara-Qoto reported a shortage of grain and requested that another sub-secretariat, in Ganzhou, provide 120 piculs of milled wheat, only to be informed that the other sub-secretariat was also low on grain and that Qara-Qoto should rush the delivery of wheat.[47] Another document shows that the sub-secretariat of the Qara-Qoto government was still involved in providing capital, or to be more accurate, trying to retrieve the capital it lent in the form of wheat seeds (needed for upcoming spring planting).[48] A 1371 communication between Qara-Qoto authorities and the Gansu Branch Secretariat discusses the dismissal of the chief instructor of Qara-Qoto's Confucian Academy on charges of incompetence and the appointment of his replacement. In more orderly times, such a decision would have been approved by the Hanlin Academy in the capital. Given the distance between Gansu and the Great Yuan court (encamped along the Kerülen River at the time), however, regional government operated with greater autonomy.[49] Another document dating sometime between the late 1350s and the early 1370s indicates that officials circulated regionally, sometimes holding office in a single locale for extended periods.[50]

A few documents, however, do offer glimpses of warfare's impact on the Yuan regional governance. Qara-Qoto was one of several administrative units that had been upgraded into a sub-secretariat. The expansion of sub-secretariat units began in the 1350s and continued without perceptible interruption into

[45] Marco Polo, *The Travels* (1959 Penguin edition), p. 61.
[46] Hu Xiaopeng, "Yuan Gansu xingsheng," p. 42.
[47] [M1 0192] (F14: W6A), *ZHW*, vol. 2, p. 271. Cited in Yang Yanbin, "Shixi Yuanmo zhi Bei Yuan chuqi," pp. 153–55.
[48] [TK214], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 219; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 436–37; Zhu Jianlu, "Heishuicheng suochu."
[49] Guo Zhaobin, "You Heishuicheng wenshu."
[50] Document TK226 lists appointments of twenty-one officials to posts in regional government. Most had already been serving in and around Suzhou or Gansu more broadly, but two had been given posts within General Regional Military Commands in Quxiandalin and Beiting, located in today's Kuqa and Jimsar Counties, northeast of Urumqi, approximately 620 miles (1,000 km) and 1,050 miles (1,700 km) west of Suzhou, respectively. See [TK226], *EHWX*, vol. 4, pp. 228–29; Sun, *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 446–48. For analysis, see Du Lihui, "E cang Heishuicheng Suzhou." Du believes the Bureau of Personnel at the Great Khan's court reviewed the appointments, but the evidence is thin.

the post-1368 years.[51] These sub-secretariats were an effort to bolster state control in the provinces in the face of intensifying unrest.[52] They also provided posts for officials fleeing the chaotic hinterlands. Several 1372 documents reveal preparations for an imminent military clash with the approaching Ming army.[53] They mention military appointments, the elevation of Qara-Qoto's administrative status to sub-secretariat, and an intelligence report on the Ming army's movements.[54]

Thus, the Qara-Qoto materials show regional administration stretching and adapting to meet the needs of the day. This was not likely a new development. Distance from the capitals, whether Daidu, Shangdu, or Qara-Qorum, provided local officials a measure of autonomy. After 1368, officials in places like Qara-Qoto may have felt a growing separation from the Great Khan. This may explain a puzzling date found on a fragment of one Qara-Qoto document (which appears on another document's reverse side). The date is "thirty-first year of the Zhizheng reign." The Zhizheng reign ended in its thirtieth year, or 1370, the year Toghan-Temür died. Elsewhere in Great Yuan lands, indeed even within Qara-Qoto, 1371 was the "first year of the Xuanguang reign."[55] Was "thirty-first year of the Zhizheng reign" the product of sloppy record-keeping or the result of communication delays caused by distance and unsettled conditions?

Qara-Qoto documents' form is revealing too. It suggests that from 1368 to 1372, much of the Yuan administrative system survived largely intact in Qara-Qoto and Gansu. The documents are written in bureaucratic Chinese on paper and impressed with Mongolian language seals written in the Pakpa script. The documents observe standard administrative forms of the Yuan dynasty, clearly indicating whether a document was addressed to an office of higher, lower, or equal ranking in the bureaucratic system. Three documents from 1372

[51] *HCW*, p. 79; Yang Yanbin, "Shixi Yuanmo zhi Bei Yuan chuqi"; Zhu Jianlu, "Yuanmo yu Bei Yuan chuqi." Zhu argues that some sub-secretariats were under the jurisdiction of the central government, that is, branches of the Central Secretariat in Daidu but that others were under the jurisdiction of the Branch Secretariats, the provincial governments of the Yuan. During the 1340s and 1350s, the Yuan court had adopted a policy of dispatching outstanding officials from the capital to serve in the provinces to strengthen local governments' ability to deal quickly and effectively with the challenges of the day, including floods, famine, drought, locust infestations, and rebellion. See Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians*, pp. 82–86; "Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule," pp. 574–75.

[52] Ma Shunping, "Bei Yuan 'Xuanguang'," p. 33.

[53] Black and white photographs of [TK 204V] appear in *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209. For document description and transcription, see *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 421–22. As Ma Shunping ("Bei Yuan 'Xuanguang'," pp. 33–34) notes, three separate orders recorded on a single piece of paper were likely copies kept on file for local administration.

[54] [TK 204V], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209. For black and white photographs of [Doc. TK 214], see *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 219. For document description and transcription, see *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 436–37.

[55] [TK 203v], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 207; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, p. 418.

(all recopied on a single sheet of paper) are written in Chinese; one also refers to a memorandum written in "the Uyghur script," that is, Mongolian.[56] The remnants of the Yuan dynasty's standard Sinophone epistolary opening, "In [the authority of] the Sacred Edict of the Emperor" (*huangdi shengzhi li*) also appear in all three. The documents are dated with Yuan reign period names. Nine documents are dated the twenty-ninth and thirtieth year of the Zhizheng reign period (1369 and 1370).[57] An additional nine are dated with the Xuanguang reign period name (1371–78).[58]

Despite continuity in administrative structure and political symbols of authority, it seems likely that Qara-Qoto and other cities in Yuan territory suffered increasing duress. Each time an administrative or military unit fell to Ming arms or suasion, Yuan structures of governance further deteriorated. They ceased to forward taxes, manpower, or information to the court or higher levels of regional government. Conversely, those who fled territory that had come under Ming control sought refuge in places like Qara-Qoto, which were hard-pressed to supply the required food, horses, houses, and employment. The grain shortages in Qara-Qoto and Ganzhou reflect difficult times. The very paper upon which many of the documents from these years suggest mounting challenges for the Yuan government; seven of the eighteen extant reports and letters from Qara-Qoto during these years are written on the backs of old government documents or even Buddhist sutras, perhaps suggesting that as economic conditions worsened and trade diminished, a paper shortage resulted.[59]

However, we should be cautious about interpreting evidence to fit a predetermined conclusion. We know that in 1368 Toghan-Temür abandoned the vast majority of his Chinese territory. We also know that by 1388, intense political instability significantly undermined Great Yuan power. We know that eventually the Ming seized control of this region. We are primed to see signs of terminal decline in the Qara-Qoto documents. However, documents from earlier in the Yuan period similarly recycled paper. Thus, it may have been an ongoing practice rather than a response to deteriorating conditions. Evidence of economic collapse during this period can seem similarly obvious. Several documents from the 1360s refer to wheat as a standard accounting unit.[60] One might interpret this as reversion to a simpler form of economic

[56] [TK 204V], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 421–22.
[57] *HCW*, p. 78. For a photograph of a document [TK203V] dated Zhizheng 31, see *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 207. For document description and transcription, see *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, p. 418.
[58] *EHWX*, vol. 4, pp. 198 [TK 194V], 209 [TK204V], 217 [TK211V]; vol. 6, pp. 16 [B53V], 133 [Д 1339V], 136 [Д 2158V].
[59] *HCW*, p. 80; Chen Chaohui, "Heishuicheng chutu Bei Yuan," p. 69.
[60] *HCW*, p. 80, pp. 51–52; Zhou Yongjie, "Yuandai Yijinailu shichang," pp. 151–52; Zhu Jianlu, "Heishuicheng suochu," 116–17; Chen Chaohui, "Heishuicheng chutu Bei Yuan," p. 69.

exchange resulting from diminished use of paper currency and silver as the local economy stagnated. However, it is dangerous to extrapolate given the small number of surviving documents. Based on a single 1370 document that sets the terms of redeeming an indentured servant in silver, one study concludes that after 1370, silver was the predominant unit of value in Qara-Qoto.[61] It is entirely possible that collapsing Great Yuan administrative capacity combined with economic and social dislocation caused by military fighting with Ming armies to drive Qara-Qoto into a downward spiral during the late 1360s and 1370s. Yet, in light of the small number and only preliminary study of surviving sources, definitive conclusions are premature.

Control of Qara-Qoto and the Hexi Corridor

Mongol nobles continued to figure in Great Yuan regional administration after 1368. *The Ming Veritable Records* indicate that in 1370 the Prince of Qi (Dorjiban) and the Prince of Gaochang (Qoshang) submitted to the Ming dynasty.[62] Shortly thereafter, the Ming throne ordered that regional military commissions be established for the Princes of Qishan, Gaochang, and Wujing. As he informed his officials, Zhu Yuanzhang extended newly surrendered Great Yuan nobles special privileges as evidence of his good faith.

> In the reception of members of the former Yuan ruling house such as the princes of Gaochang, Qi and others, We appointed them to prestigious posts and additionally ordered that they be permitted to wear swords while on duty in the imperial bodyguard. We were without the single bit of suspicion. How could they betray [Us]?[63]

These entries suggest a rapid collapse of support among Mongol nobles for the Great Yuan regime.[64] Zhu Yuanzhang notes that he gave prestigious posts to members of the Yuan ruling house. He showed them honor and trust by

See for example, an undated Yuan document that is thought to be a tax ledger showing the collection of wheat. See [Doc. TK230] *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 241; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 476–78.

61 Zhou Yongjie, "Yuandai Yijinailu shichang," p. 152. He argues (without corroborating evidence) that warfare after 1370 drew wheat out of circulation (as it was needed by military forces) and consequently Mongol nobles fled with large amounts of silver.

62 *MTZSL*, 55.3a, p. 1077. Transcription is from Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 224, fn. 293.

63 *MTZSL*, 60.3b–4a, pp. 1172–73. Quotation appears on 60.4a, p. 1173.

64 Ye Sheng's note (cited earlier) recounts the family's fortune after its transfer of allegiance to the Great Ming. In 1370, the Prince of Gaochang submitted to Ming forces that had just captured Lanzhou. He first sent his seals of office and then reported to the Ming military headquarters with an unspecified number of followers. At the time the Prince was in his early twenties. The Ming throne granted him the title Commander Welcomed from Afar. He was appointed as vice commander of Gaochang Garrison. This was a standard practice for the Ming dynasty. In essence it created an administrative-military vehicle to facilitate the transfer of allegiance of local leader. The post of vice commander was to be hereditary. The Prince immediately opened administrative offices to coordinate the submission of several hundred people. He was also quickly integrated into the Ming imperial war machine. He was put in charge of supplying Feng

allowing them to wear swords while on duty in the imperial bodyguard.[65] Military institutions were often the first wave of the Ming state's advance into new territories. Regional military commissions and garrisons coordinated the Ming dynasty's administrative organization of local populations and extraction of resources. Thus, the Ming court seems to have expanded its control into these regions both through recruitment of Mongol nobles and institution building.

Yet, Qara-Qoto documents from these years reveal the limitations of Ming dynastic control in the region and the survival of Great Yuan regional governance. One from 1372 refers to the appointment of the Prince of Lu, Öljei-Temür, as an administrator, usually meaning an executive in a branch secretariat.[66] Not a title the Ming court used, this was likely a reference to the Prince of Lu's post in Yuan regional governance. Another document is a Chinese translation of an intelligence report on the Ming army. The original was written in Mongolian in the Uyghur script. This document fragment refers explicitly to "the red bandit Feng Sheng," that is, the Ming field commander Feng Sheng, and his attacks on Ganzhou, the administrative seat of Gansu, among other places. The report mentions "imperial princes and imperial in-laws." Several characters are missing from this passage. Perhaps these privileged members of the Great Yuan were mobilized for the defense of Ganzhou and Qara-qoto.[67]

A 1371 document shows the Prince of Qi active in Great Yuan governance.[68] The Prince of Qi and Grand Defender Maiju recommended a thirty-four-year-old Uyghur man, a member of the Prince of Gaochang's personal

Sheng's army with grain. He was provided a residence in the capital, a stipend to cover his living expenses, an official title, and hereditary military posts for his male descendants. He died four years later in Nanjing, which strongly suggests that the court had relocated the prince and family to the capital. When he died, the state provided for his funeral. One of the dynasty's most celebrated writers and a senior court minister, Song Lian, composed his funerary inscription. See *SLQJ*, vol. 2, p. 929–30; Ye Sheng, *Shuidong ri ji*, *juan* 27, pp. 264–65. When he first surrendered, the Ming throne distributed two bolts of cotton fabric for each soldier under his command to use for winter clothes. See *MTZSL*, 58.1a, p. 1123. The Prince of Gaochang was a descendant of the Uyghur Iduq-qut. See Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 220, fn. 281.

[65] The Prince of Gaochang served at the Ming court, but no surviving evidence indicates that the Prince of Qi did.

[66] [TK 204V], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 421–22. Chen Guangwen ("Dunhuang Mogaoku di 237 ku," p. 90) argues that the transcription "Prince of Lu" must be mistaken because such a title did not exist during the Yuan dynasty. The point requires further investigation.

[67] [TK 204V], *EHWX*, vol. 4, p. 209; *EHHWZ*, vol. 2, pp. 421–22; Ma Shunping, "Xuanguang ernian."

[68] As Fan and Deng ("Heicheng chutu de jujianxin," pp. 282–83) note, the Prince of Righteous (Yiwang), who later privately compiled Ming accounts suggest was captured by Ming imperial forces during the seizure of Daidu in 1368, appears in a 1371 document as a senior official in the Qara-Qoto administration.

guard (*keshig*), to serve as a judge in the Branch Central Secretariat.[69] Personnel recommendation as a mechanism to staff local government may suggest a reduction in the central government's influence, but such recommendations were a common element of Great Yuan governance. Thus, the document need not be read as the collapse of regional government. Instead, what we see is Mongol nobles submitting a written petition for an administrative post for a Uyghur client (with prior administrative experience) that survives in a Chinese-language document and that observes many elements of standard administrative protocol. All this points to a functional regional bureaucracy.

Ming imperial reports from 1372 and 1373 strengthen the impression that Mongol nobles active in and around Qara-Qoto remained in the service of the Great Yuan. These documents note that Ming armies in Gansu clashed with the Prince of Qi, who as noted had ostensibly "surrendered" to the Ming in 1370.[70] How should we understand these apparently contradictory accounts? It may be that the prince offered his allegiance to the Ming throne but later reconsidered his decision. As noted in Chapter 3, such reversals were common during these years. Zhu Yuanzhang understood that alliances with Great Yuan personnel, especially nobles and senior military commanders, were always contingent. The Ming court was not the only game in town. It is for this reason that Zhu Yuanzhang extended Great Yuan nobles preferential treatment. He offered clear gestures of imperial favor such as incorporating them into dynastic ritual life at the capital and posts in the imperial guard.[71] When Great Yuan nobles abandoned their allegiance to the Ming throne, Zhu Yuanzhang depicted their decision as betrayal. To do otherwise would be to acknowledge that Yuan aristocrats had sampled but rejected his rulership and patronage.

In 1372, Ming armies advanced into the territory supervised by the Yuan's Gansu Branch Secretariat. The *Ming Veritable Records*' account claims an uninterrupted series of military triumphs and total dominance.[72] Half a dozen

[69] [M1 1111] (F9 W30B), *ZHW*, vol. 6, p. 1357; Fan and Deng, "Heicheng chutu de jujianxin," p. 278.

[70] *MTZSL*, 74.2b–3a, pp. 1358–59; 76.6b–7a, pp. 1406–7; 83.6b, p. 1492; Fan and Deng, "Heicheng chutu de jujianxin," p.280.

[71] *MTZSL*, 58.8b, p. 1138. See also Ye Sheng, *Shuidong ri ji*, *juan* 27, pp. 264–65. Cited in Fan and Deng, "Heicheng chutu de jujianxin," 281. The stele account was composed by the scholar and official, Yu Ji (1272–1348); it describes the Prince of Gaochang's history of service to the Great Yuan. See Tao Zongyi, *Nancun*, *juan* 26, p. 327.

[72] Ma Shunping ("Hongwu wunian Ming Meng," p. 6) gushes that Feng Sheng's 1372 expedition was "the first time since the mid-Tang that the military power of a Han polity from the Central Plain had entered the Hexi Corridor; in terms of China's intercourse with the west and in terms of political history, it has special significance." He also maintains that the expedition "laid the foundations for the jurisdictional parameters of the later Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission." However, Ma makes clear that Feng Sheng immediately withdrew from the region without having established lasting administrative or military control. Similarly, Zhao Xianhai ("Mingchu Gansu jianzhen," p. 93) observes that the Ming dynasty "occupied" Gansu

Great Yuan commanders submitted. One brought more than 800 households with him. The Yuan officer defending Qara-Qoto, Buyan-Temür, surrendered the city. Ming forces forcibly relocated remaining residents to "the hinterlands."[73] Ming sources strongly suggest that most of Qara-Qoto's population had abandoned the city before Ming forces arrived, but such documents provide few details. One source states that Yuan commanders, knowing that they were likely to suffer defeat in a battle against Ming armies, had evacuated local populations and all their livestock. The evacuation effort included not just Qara-Qoto but also nearly half a dozen settlements in the region westward through the Yumen and Yangguan Passes (approximately 55 miles/90 km northwest and 37 miles/60 km southwest of today's Dunhuang, respectively). Other sources simply note that residents had scattered.[74] The former description suggests a relatively high degree of administrative capacity, while the latter implies a governmental collapse.

Despite reports of repeated victories, no evidence shows that the Ming government established even minimal administrative control in Gansu at this time. Following his victories, the Ming commander Feng Sheng immediately withdrew his army from the region. One generally reliable memoir written by a Ming officer offers the following account of Feng Sheng's withdrawal from Ganzhou in particular and the Hexi Corridor in general.[75]

> Feng Sheng feared the Uyghur troops. He burnt all the city's barracks, storehouses, more than 200,000 piculs of rice, wheat, and bean fodder that had been delivered there, and military supplies, and then abandoned the city. He also abandoned the three cities of Ningxia, Xiliang, and Zhanglang. He took only cattle, sheep, horses, and camels, which he ordered the soldiers to hurry along as they retreated. As for those who collapsed and died on the journey, the soldiers were hungry but didn't dare to eat; instead they continued to carry their loads on the way home. Soldiers who had starved to death filled the roads, but no one paid the slightest attention.[76]

in 1372 but then shows that the Ming dynasty exercised minimal control over Gansu until the 1390s. Rossabi ("Ming Foreign Policy," p. 23) writes that in 1372, Feng Sheng "consolidated Ming control over the northwest, reaching to Chia-yu-kuan, the traditional last outpost of Chinese civilization in the region." He does not elaborate on the nature of Ming control. Later in the same essay, he makes clear that Ming dynastic influence in places like Hami began to bite only in the fifteenth century.

[73] *MTZSL*, 74.2b–3a, p. 1358–59; *MTZSL*, 76.6b–7a, p. 1406–7. Buyan-Temür seems to have fled after surrendering the city. He submitted to Ming authorities the following year. See *MTZSL*, 81.3a, p. 1461.

[74] Ma Shunping, "Mingdai Shaanxi xingdusi," p. 111, fn. 8; Zhao Xianhai, "Hongwu chunian Gansu diyuan zhengzhi," p. 83.

[75] For Yu Ben's account, see Dreyer, "*Chi-Shih-Lu of Yü Pen*"; Li, "Zailun Mingchu."

[76] *JSLJZ*, p. 364. See also Zhao Xianhai, "Hongwu chunian Gansu diyuan zhengzhi," p. 82; "Mingchu Gansu jianzhen," pp. 93–94. Ma Shunping ("Hongwu wunian Ming Meng," p. 11) mistakenly refers to the Prince of Hami, Gunashiri, as the head of the Moghul khanate.

"Uyghur troops" here may refer to forces of the Moghul khanate, a polity whose nominal ruler was a Chinggisid aristocrat (see Chapter 1). Its ruling elite would have been keenly interested in geopolitical developments in their backyard, but there is no evidence that the khanate dispatched troops. After Tughlugh-Temür Khan's death in 1363, political infighting coupled with repeated attacks by Tamerlane much reduced the Moghul khanate's capacity for intervention in the Hexi Corridor.[77] But Feng Sheng could not ignore such a possibility. Elsewhere in his memoir, the author cited used "Uyghur troops" to refer to Great Yuan soldiers.

In either case, Feng Sheng did not establish lasting Ming state control in places like Ganzhou, Ningxia, Xiliang, or Zhuanglang. Instead, he destroyed military assets that the Moghul khanate might otherwise use. Feng Sheng seized livestock, which was portable and could be used on the long journey home. If the memoir cited is accurate, Feng Sheng's retreat was a brutal, forced march intended to put as much distance as possible between the Ming army and Gansu as quickly as possible – even if it meant significant loss of life.[78] Thus, the Great Yuan suffered military losses, lost several thousand subjects (whether through voluntary flight or coerced relocation by the Ming state), and experienced temporary interruption to its local control. However, many people in Gansu, including Qara-Qoto, chose political affiliation with the Great Yuan.

Thinning Traces of Great Yuan Regional Governance

For the next several decades, much of the Hexi Corridor remained beyond Ming dynastic control. Less clear, however, is how much Great Yuan regional governance survived. One of the few pieces of evidence available to reconstruct the history of Gansu during this transitional period is a small copper alloy seal. It measures 3.3 inches in width by 3.6 inches in height (8.4 cm × 9.2 cm). Archeologists discovered it at the base of a wall inside a shop during the 1983–84 excavations of Qara-Qoto. The seal's inscription is written in Mongolian in the Pakpa script. It reads, "Seal of the Judge of the

[77] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 13).

[78] Yu Ben (*JSLJZ*, p. 318) recalls that in 1369, Feng Sheng had occupied Hezhou. "As [it was] a land beyond transformation [that is, beyond dynastic borders] that could not be defended, he burned nearly all the city towers, warehouses, and houses and retreated south with prisoners. The three hundred *li* (100 miles/160 km) from Taohe to Jishi Pass were filled with corpses. There was no sign of life." Noting that the *Ming Veritable Records* do not mention that Feng Sheng's troops reached Hezhou, Li Xinfeng suggests that Yu Ben may have misremembered events. What Yu Ben's account does suggest is that well-informed military men with on-the-ground experience found it entirely plausible that leading Ming commanders would beat a hasty retreat from borderlands even when it entailed significant costs in human lives.

Branch Bureau of Military of the Yongchang and other such regions."[79] The date and office title are inscribed in Chinese characters on the seal's opposite face, that is, on the same side as the seal's handle.

What does a single seal reveal and what does it leave veiled? It is, for instance, impossible to know when the seal was deposited in Qara-Qoto. It may have been abandoned when Ming forces briefly occupied Qara-Qoto or decades later when the Ming dynasty established a more lasting presence. Or, to be honest, the seal may have found its resting spot much later and under completely different circumstances. Chinese scholars commonly describe Qara-Qoto after 1372 or so as "an empty" city occupied only by Yuan troops.[80] However, there is no evidence to support such a conclusion beyond an absence of written documents after 1372. Even if we were to accept the idea of Qara-Qoto as a garrison city after the early 1370s, military forces, especially those closely tied to bureaucratic states, produce voluminous paperwork, and the administrative seal suggests that Yuan officials worked in the city.

So what does the seal's date, "first year of Tianyuan," tell us? Tianyuan was the reign period of Toghus-Temür, Ayushiridara's successor, who became Great Khan in 1378. If we assume that the Tianyuan reign period began at the beginning of the first full year of his rule, the first year of Tianyuan was 1379. As Chapter 2 showed, Ayushiridara's death in 1378 represented a potential political crisis for the Great Yuan. The recently enthroned Toghus-Temür had not yet consolidated control within the Mongol nobility or the broader Great Yuan polity. Beginning in 1378, the Ming court intensified both diplomatic and military pressure on the Great Yuan and its key supporters (more on this in later chapters).

And what of the place, Yongchang, and the office, Branch Bureau of Military? Today, Yongchang (in Gansu Province) is a two-hour, 110-mile (180 km) drive southeast of Ganzhou (today's Zhangye) or an eleven-hour, 460-mile (about 750 km) drive largely south of Qara-Qoto, which is today part of Inner Mongolian. During the Yuan period, Qara-Qoto, Ganzhou, and Yongchang had all belonged to the Gansu Branch Secretariat. As noted, the Yuan court had established the Branch Bureau of Military to counter a growing Ming military presence in Gansu late in the 1370s. Qara-Qoto linked China proper to both Central Asia and the Mongolian steppe. Loss of Yongchang would have left Qara-Qoto vulnerable to Ming armies. That in turn would have greatly facilitated a direct strike against Qara-Qorum.

Finally, what of the Ministry of Rites, which is inscribed as the seal's issuing authority? The Ministry of Rites was one of the six major ministries

[79] *HCW*, p. 81. A color photograph and brief description of the seal are found in Sun Weizu, *Lidai xiyin*, p. 115.
[80] *HCW*, p. 81.

of the central government. If the ministry offices were located within the Great Khan's mobile court, that is, somewhere in the central or eastern regions of the Mongolian steppe, and if the ministry did issue the seal, we could reasonably conclude that the Great Yuan court retained ties to regional administration. Toghus-Temür and his advisors may have decided to demonstrate the new Great Khan's authority in a tangible way, the casting and delivery of a new copper alloy seal. The cynically minded, however, would note the lack of corroborating evidence that the Ministry of Rites had issued the seal, which in turn would undermine any claims about ties between the Great Khan's court and regional governance. After all, local authorities could have simply cast their own seal. On the other hand, even if we were to entertain such suspicions, it is striking that officials concluded that allegiance to the Great Yuan in 1379 would bolster their legitimacy in Gansu.

Documentary evidence sheds light on the broader picture. In 1380, the Ming throne ordered an attack on Gansu. The commanding officer, Mu Ying (1345–92), elected to circumvent the Hexi Corridor although it meant a longer, more arduous route for his army, which faced a greater danger of running short of food, fodder, and water. His decision to endanger his expedition suggests a healthy respect for the Great Yuan's military presence in the region.[81]

Like Feng Sheng before him, Mu Ying made no attempt to establish lasting military or administrative control. Mu's scouts reported that the Great Yuan commander Toghochi had encamped his army in or near Qara-Qoto. After a forced march through the desert, Mu Ying surrounded Toghochi. Having "seized" all Toghochi's "followers," Mu Ying "turned back," that is, he left Qara-Qoto.[82] Nearly four years pass before Qara-Qoto reappears in the *Ming Veritable Records*. In contrast, there is evidence of Great Yuan administration during those years in Gansu. Although far from conclusive proof for firm Great Yuan control, we have another Great Yuan seal, written in Mongolian in the Pakpa script, for the Offices of the Right and Left of the Gansu Branch Secretariat. Issued by the Central Secretariat, the seal is dated "a day in the sixth lunar month of the fifth year of the Tianyuan period," that is, 1383.[83] Seals suggest paperwork, and paperwork suggests administrative activity, which in turn suggests governance. Especially suggestive is that the Central Secretariat issued a seal to a regional administrative office. The Central Secretariat, the highest organ of Great Yuan administration, presumably

[81] This paragraph draws from Li Ling, "Yuanmo Mingchu Bei Yuan."
[82] *MTZSL*, 130.8b, p. 2074.
[83] Luo Fuyi, "Bei Yuan guanyin," p. 34; Wang, *Xinchu lidi xiyin jishi*, p. 112. For a photograph of the seal, see Luo Fuyi, *Gugong bowuyuan cang guxiyin*, pp. 151–52. It is held today in the Palace Museum collection in Beijing.

was located near the Great Khan, who in 1383 used Qara-Qorum as his principal base.

Textual sources from the Ming dynasty confirm that the region remained outside Ming imperial control well into the fifteenth century. In 1384, the throne directed the commander of Liangzhou Garrison (today's Wuwei, Gansu Province), Song Cheng (d. 1407), to lead a punitive campaign against the "the rebel native soldiers of the western barbarians." One account notes that in the Qara-Qoto region, he executed the rebel leader "and countless numbers of his followers."[84] The remainder he delivered as captives to the capital.[85] When Song Cheng's army arrived in Qara-Qoto, he captured several Great Yuan officers and officials. The editors of the *Ming Veritable Records* describe them as personnel "of the former Yuan."[86] This designation was a polite fiction maintained in the *Ming Veritable Records* to suggest that the Great Yuan was a thing of the past. The size of the population these men led – more than 18,700 people – shows that the Great Yuan had not vanished.[87] Depending on the account, the Ming commander impressed either 500 or nearly 1,000 able-bodied men from the larger group for his army. The rest were either "resettled on good lands to farm and herd as they wished" or they were "released and returned."[88]

In either case, they were not put under Ming rule. The size of the contingent seized and released suggests a sizeable Yuan presence in Qara-Qoto and environs. One suspects that the Ming expeditionary force, which had not yet completed its mission, was in no position to keep nearly 20,000 people under guard. The *Ming Veritable Record* is curiously silent on the circumstances of the Great Yuan officials' submission. Did it follow a military loss to Ming forces? Was it a negotiated settlement? Whatever the situation, Qara-Qoto was not the mission's target. There is no evidence that the Ming throne intended to seize Qara-Qoto at this point.

In fact, not until the mid-1390s did the Ming dynasty begin to establish control over the Hexi Corridor. In 1372, the Ming state had created the Gansu, Zhuanglang, and Liangzhou garrisons. However, they are best understood as institutional vehicles to facilitate the incorporation of former Great Yuan personnel into the polity rather than the projection of Ming power.[89] The Ming state created the Branch Regional Military Commission of Shaanxi as early as

[84] My thanks to Christopher Atwood, who suggests Yisürgem as a possible transcription of the leader's name.
[85] Huang Jin, "Song Cheng zhuan," *Huang Ming kai kuo gong chen lu*, 20.6a (*MZZC*, vol. 39, p. 219).
[86] *MTZSL* 162.2b, p. 2514. [87] *MTZSL*, 162.2b, p. 2514.
[88] *MTZSL*, 162.2b, p. 2514; Huang Jin, "Song Cheng zhuan," *Huang Ming kai kuo gong chen lu*, 20.6a (*MZZC*, vol. 39, p. 219).
[89] Ma Shunping, "Mingdai Shaanxi xingdusi," p. 111.

1374, but it too was largely a nominal unit that exercised no effective military control until 1393. Until that time, the Ming dynasty's strategic priorities were focused on the Yuan court in the steppe and its affiliates in Yunnan and Liaodong.

After the subjugation of Yunnan in 1382 and Liaodong in 1387, the Ming state took steps to project Ming power into the northern Hexi Corridor. Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that the Branch Regional Military Commission of Shaanxi's administrative seat be moved to Ganzhou. Zhu Yuanzhang also instructed his fourteenth son, Zhu Ying (1376–1419), to move from the capital in Nanjing to his new home in Ganzhou, near Qara-Qoto. The Ming founder regularly used his sons as bulwarks along dynastic frontiers, visible signs of imperial rule at the local level. However, the prince sojourned for nearly two years in Pingliang, while construction in Ganzhou was completed. In 1395, when the prince finally moved to Ganzhou, Song Cheng, the Regional Commander of Gansu, also relocated his headquarters to Ganzhou.[90]

Ming sources repeatedly refer to abandoned cities and counties in the region and the relocation of border populations during the late fourteenth century, but Qara-Qoto was not as empty as we may imagine.[91] In 1405, the Regional Commander of Gansu, Song Cheng (who had briefly occupied Qara-Qoto in 1384) submitted a memorial proposing that soldiers be used to expand Qara-Qoto's walls. Song insisted they were too small. He also asked that merchants be summoned to Qara-Qoto, where they would arrange for the delivery of grain in exchange for salt certificates. This was a standard measure to feed imperial troops along the frontier. In addition, Song requested that agricultural tools be supplied to military personnel working on state farms, another common policy to ensure sufficient grain for dynastic armies and their families.

Finally, Song Cheng suggested that chieftains under the Prince of Loyalty and Obedience (Zhongshunwang) be given posts, presumably with the intention that they oversee a portion of local governance. The Prince of Loyalty and Obedience here almost certainly refers to the Prince of Hami, a Chinggisid noble named Toqto'a. He was a member of the House of the Prince of Bin, a Chaghadaid noble who exercised influence in Turpan during the late Yuan period. Toqto'a had spent several years at the Ming court as a member of the

[90] This paragraph draws from Liang Zhisheng, "Hongwu ershiliunian"; Ma Shunping, "Mingdai Shaanxi xingdusi"; "Hongwu wunian Ming Meng"; Zhao, "Hongwu chunian Gansu diyuan zhengzhi," pp. 83–84.

[91] Based on textual evidence, scholars often assume that the Great Yuan abandoned Qara-Qorum after Toghus-Temür's regicide in 1388. See, for instance, Cao Yongnian, "Guanyu Bei Yuan Xuanguang Tianyuan." Archeology, however, provides no conclusive evidence for the date of Qara-Qorum's demise as a city. See Reichert, *Craft Production*, chapter 9.

imperial bodyguard. When the reigning Prince of Hami, his uncle, had died, Zhu Di had appointed Toqto'a as the successor to the throne. Toqto'a's grandmother, however, had other ideas and drove him from the city. In 1406, as part of an effort to reinstate Toqto'a, Zhu Di wrote to the elders of Hami. He promised that Toqto'a would be more deferential in the future. At the same time, Zhu Di, however, warned that acting without his permission constituted an affront to the Ming throne.[92] The proposals regarding the Prince of Hami do not directly relate to Qara-Qoto, but they suggest that Song Cheng perceived the territory from Hami to Qara-Qoto as an integrated region. Especially striking is that the reigning Great Khan of the Yuan, Gülichi, was attempting to increase his influence in Hami in the early fifteenth century. He was rumored to have poisoned to death Toqto'a's predecessor as Prince of Loyalty and Obedience. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Ming, the Yuan, and the Moghul khanate contended for influence in places like Hami and Turpan.[93] Whether that competition extended to Qara-Qoto is unclear.

Song Cheng did not doubt Qara-Qoto's continued strategic relevance. Zhu Di praised Song's devotion and concern for his soldiers. However, he rejected plans to expand the city walls or relocate merchants. Rebuilding the walls was a massive project, and implementing the grain-for-salt certificate program was too difficult. The emperor agreed that farm tools should be supplied and that Ministry of War was to issue titles to the prince's men.[94] Song Cheng's interest in bolstering Qara-Qoto's wall may be related to broader concerns about border security. Several years later in 1409, Song Cheng received permission to send a contingent "beyond the pass" to patrol Qara-Qoto and other presumably nearby places.[95] The language reflects the perception that Qara-Qoto was located along a frontier that needed to be patrolled.

In fact, Qara-Qoto may not have been subject to Ming control. One week later, Zhu Di ordered a Mongol commander in Liangzhou Garrison, Wu Yuncheng and another local to "go to Qara-Qoto to reconnoiter on the true situation of the caitiffs," that is, Mongols. This does not sound like an outing from one Ming garrison to another but rather an intelligence gathering expedition into neutral, perhaps, enemy territory. The mission was prompted by reports from newly submitted Mongols. Many were unhappy with Bunyashiri's recent enthronement as Great Khan.[96] Zhu Di likely feared that a succession crisis among Mongol elites would endanger border security. That Zhu Di sent his men to Qara-Qoto to gather information suggests that it was a

[92] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 50.8a, p. 759.
[93] Kim, "Isŭrram seryok," pp. 114, 122–23.
[94] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 57.1a, p. 835.
[95] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 87.2a, p. 1153.
[96] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 87.2b–3a, pp. 1154–55.

site where informed Mongols were active. It also indicates that contemporary observers, both the Ming emperor and Mongol elites, believed that political events in central and eastern Mongolia had clear consequences for places like Qara-Qoto.

Qara-Qoto's status as a location where Mongols felt safe is apparent from an incident later in 1409. A large group of Mongols under the leadership of Chinggisid nobles and senior commanders were considering offering their allegiance to the Ming throne. However, they had nagging doubts. Thus, they traveled no farther than Qara-Qoto, "without entering" Ming dynastic passes, as Zhu Di put it. The emperor feared that if it remained in Qara-Qoto for any length of time, a large group of Mongols would lead to problems. Thus, Zhu Di dispatched an official from the Hanlin Academy in Nanjing (Yang Rong) to deliver instructions to the local Ming military commander along the western frontier. In addition, the emperor sent one of his Mongol officers, Batu-Temür, and several of his lieutenants to speak with the Chinggisid noble and his people. Zhu Di ordered his border commander to deal with the Mongols properly, "whether they all came or whether they were ordered to reside in Qara-Qoto."[97]

If we peered briefly deep into the fifteenth century, we would see that Qara-Qoto continued to be an important border site. Even after its incorporation into Ming dynastic territory, it remained home to sizeable Mongol population. It straddled two worlds. Here Mongols considering allegiance to the Great Ming might first test the waters, as the example from 1409 shows. Late in the fifteenth century, a group settled in Qara-Qoto but remained uneasy about possible attack by the Ming government. They feared that Ming officials might mistake them for hostiles. At the same time, the group also worried about attack by what they called the Great Tatars (*da dazi*).[98] Despite reports of its demise in the late fourteenth century, archeologists have found at Qara-Qoto twenty-two document fragments written in *todo bičig*. This is a script developed only in the mid-seventeenth that reflects Oirat Mongolian usage.[99] This suggests some level of human habitation long after Qara-Qoto is assumed to have been abandoned.[100]

[97] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 90.3b, p. 1248.
[98] Xu Jin, *Ping fan shi mo* (shang), *GCDG*, *juan* 99, pp. 1963–64.
[99] *Zhongguo cang Heishuicheng minzu wenzi wenxian.*
[100] Qara-Qoto's demise likely resulted not from the Yuan-Ming dynastic transition or the collapse of trade routes but rather from a change in the course of Black Water River, for which the city was named. Early in the twentieth century, Aurel Stein (Stein, *Sir Aurel Stein's Central Asia*, vol. 1, p. 459) speculated that a shift in the riverbed would have "inevitably cut off irrigation from the once irrigated area, which now lies fully six miles to the east of Qara-Qoto, and fourteen miles from the nearest point of the present river channel."

Conclusion

So what does this postcard from a buried oasis city on the Ming dynasty's western frontier tell us about the Great Yuan and how does it relate to the wider arguments of this book? It reminds us that Great Yuan regional governance survived for years, even decades, following Daidu's fall. It raises the possibility that administrative functions similarly continued in Yunnan, Liaodong, and the frontier along the southern steppe, even if documents from those regions have not survived. This in turn alerts us that during the Ming dynasty's early decades, it faced a geographically expansive polity whose emblems of political authority nearly mirrored its own. In other words, during its formative years, the Ming dynasty faced a major rival. The Great Yuan remained an alternative for those disinclined to join Zhu Yuanzhang.

Attention to Great Yuan governance in Qara-Qoto during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries puts events after 1368 in clearer perspective. Exclusive focus on eighteen documents from 1368 to 1372 obscures the deep roots of the Great Yuan's rule in Qara-Qoto and the Hexi Corridor more broadly. Put differently, attention to the broader arc of Great Yuan regional governance across the 1368 divide reveals that the heavy burden of discrediting and replacing Great Yuan rule fell to the Great Ming. As later chapters show, the early Ming court did its best to depict this substantial challenge as an inevitable outcome that required recognition rather than concerted effort.

What does Qara-Qoto in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries tell us about Zhu Yuanzhang's Chinggisid narrative? Despite Qara-Qoto's strategic importance and the early Ming's periodic military interventions in Hexi Corridor and Qara-Qoto, surviving sources preserve little of Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence with Chinggisid nobles there. This absence contrasts with the relative abundance of the Ming founder's communication with the Great Khans and senior military commanders of the Great Yuan in eastern Mongolia. It also differs from Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Prince of Liang and local leaders in Yunnan, as Chapter 8 shows.

What does this relative silence mean? The Ming court likely engaged Qara-Qoto Chinggisid nobles and local military commanders. We have seen that the Ming court entered into negotiations with men like the Princes of Qi and Gaochang. It went so far as to establish military units, albeit nominal ones, to integrate them into the Ming dynastic polity. Given what we know from other more fully documented examples, written communications accompanied such arrangements. So how do we explain the absence of a Chinggisid narrative? Were documents produced but lost over time? Did the Ming court decide that such communications did not merit preservation or transmission? If so, why? Failed negotiations? Perhaps, but communications to the Great Khans did not lead to their surrender or recognition of Ming legitimacy, and yet Zhu

Yuanzhang's letters to them survive. Did correspondence fall into obscurity because Qara-Qoto nobles lacked the status of the Great Khans, the Prince of Liang, or Naghachu? Was it because, in contrast to Yunnan and Dali, Qara-Qoto and the Hexi Corridor did not produce a decisive victory for Zhu Yuanzhang that he might advertise as evidence of the Great Ming's superiority?

For now, perhaps we can conclude that like all postcards, Qara-Qoto offers a glimpse that hints at the larger whole, an intimation of something greater.

Part II

The Chinggisid Narrative at Home

5 Telling Stories and Selling Rulership

Introduction

During the mid-fourteenth century, the Yuan dynasty's fraying political and military control was both symptom and cause of spreading warfare.[1] A key but underappreciated feature of this era of conflict was negotiation and persuasion. Just as military forces clashed on land and water to secure resources and crush opponents, envoys bearing written communications and oral messages shuttled among the Yuan throne, senior members of the imperial family, royal sons-in-law, high ministers, dynastic military commanders, loyalist militia leaders, and aspiring warlords. Objectives included building alliances and intimidating enemies, justifying rebellion and restoring imperial power. And just as ambitious leaders eagerly employed new advances in military science, so did canny strivers seek advantage by honing diplomatic rhetoric.[2] Such was the crucible of conflict and competition in which Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors first crafted their Chinggisid narrative.

From the 1350s to the late 1380s, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors were locked in fierce competition first with regional warlords and later with the Yuan dynasty for military superiority and political legitimacy. It is easy to overlook this competition's length and intensity, but it lasted for decades after the Ming dynasty's establishment and exercised a formative influence on political culture. The tendency to ignore such competition is in large part tribute to the success of Zhu and his counselors. Through military force and rhetorical skill, they not only destroyed dynastic enemies but also seemed to render them marginal to the Ming polity's apparently inexorable rise. Another reason such competition's intensity and duration goes unobserved is that it is easy to forget contingency. Zhu Yuanzhang established a dynasty that

[1] Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians*; "Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule"; "Transformations of Messianic Revolt"; Dreyer, *Early Ming China*, pp. 12–64; "Military Origins"; "Poyang Campaign, 1363"; Mote, *Imperial China*, pp. 521–41, 546–63; *Poet Kao Ch'i*; "Rise of the Ming Dynasty"; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*.

[2] On firearms' role in Zhu Yuanzhang's rise in the 1350s and 1360s, see Andrade, *Gunpowder*, pp. 55–72; Wang Zhaochun, *Zhongguo gudai junshi*, pp. 255–63.

his family and its supporters preserved for nearly three centuries. Historians focus on how Zhu Yuanzhang overcame challenges and rivals rather than dwell on the near misses and also-rans. Although understandable, such a tendency impoverishes our understanding of the early Ming dynasty and the historical richness of fourteenth-century Eurasia.

This and the following chapter examine the way the Ming court told the story of the Yuan dynasty at home. Later chapters focus on Zhu Yuanzhang's communications with the Yuan ruling house, its allies near and far, and neighboring countries. Home and abroad, however, were far from mutually exclusive categories. During the 1350s and most of the 1360s, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors, often as ostensible subjects of the Yuan crown, operated in territory that the Yuan dynasty claimed as its own. After the Ming dynasty's establishment in 1368, the Yuan ruling house's allies controlled large areas that the Ming throne would come to see as its own, while former Yuan subjects and others – including many non-Chinese – were incorporated into the Ming polity.

During the late fourteenth century, the Ming court developed a multifaceted strategy to address the Mongol legacy. The enduring challenge was to exploit the Mongol empire's personnel, prestige, and practices while neutralizing the Great Yuan as a military and political threat. Whenever possible, the Ming court tried to win the allegiance of the Great Yuan elite and its supporters, make use of its transnational network of personal relations, and lay claim to the prestige of the Great Yuan. Thus, the Ming court accentuated the Great Yuan's glories, both to assuage Chinggisid elites, allies, and subjects and to increase its own prestige as successor to the Great Yuan. At the same time, however, the Great Yuan posed an acute threat to the early Ming court. As previous chapters have shown, even after its withdrawal to the steppe, the Great Yuan commanded powerful military resources and enjoyed broad recognition in eastern Eurasia.

To thread the needle, the early Ming court drew upon its military, economic, diplomatic, and rhetorical resources. The Ming founder deployed small tactical units into southern Mongol lands. His armies penetrated deep into the steppe and against Great Yuan affiliates in Liaodong to the northeast and Yunnan to the southwest. At the same time, the Ming court actively recruited Chinggisids and their allies. It variously integrated such populations into (a) the imperial officer corps and regular hinterland garrisons units, (b) hybrid border garrisons, and finally (c) political-cum-military polities that enjoyed privileged access to the Ming court in exchange for oaths of loyalty. Military campaigns, garrisons, gifts in kind, land grants, salaries, and subsidized trade privileges granted to Mongol (and Jurchen) clients all entailed economic costs for the newly established Ming dynasty. The Ming court viewed such investments as worthwhile given their enhanced security and standing. To justify military campaigns (and their attendant costs) to audiences at home and abroad, facilitate the transfer of allegiance to the Ming ruler, and diminish the

attraction of Chinggisid patronage, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched diplomatic personnel of diverse backgrounds to surrounding polities and peoples to make its case. To make its position persuasive, the Ming court developed a series of arguments and rhetorical postures that constituted its Chinggisid narrative.

The careful reader will notice contradictions and ambiguities among the Ming court's proclamations. Such tensions can be explained in part by time and circumstances. Zhu Yuanzhang did not produce out a single, tightly argued position paper on the Great Yuan that guided all his ideas and announcement throughout his career. As the following will show, he borrowed liberally both from notions circulating at the time and from centuries-old traditions. He was a bricoleur, recycling and repurposing materials. His declarations also varied according to his station in the world, which went from rebel warlord to one among four of Heaven's Sons to finally sovereign of east Eurasia's most powerful regime. The early Ming court announced bold claims sufficiently expansive to allow room for negotiation and compromises. It might add to its rhetorical repertoire, but it did not offer retractions.

The Ming Court and Its Chinggisid Narrative

The Ming court strove to craft and disseminate a narrative of Chinggisid fortunes that legitimated its own position in eastern Eurasia and discouraged ideas of Chinggisid revival. The founding Ming emperor and his ministers created a story of the rise, glory, and irreversible fall of the Chinggisids for audiences at home and abroad. The early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative highlighted such themes as the end of the Great Yuan's allotted span of rule, Chinese renewal, the physical and political marginality of the post-1368 Yuan court, and deficiencies of contemporary Great Yuan leadership. Emphasizing the superiority of Ming rulership, such a discursive strategy facilitated the transfer of allegiance from the Yuan to the Ming court. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors used the past to meet the needs of the present.

Such a project was contested. Ming emperors and their ministers battled to put the Great Yuan safely in the past, but, as previous chapters have shown, Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid Mongolian rulers attempted to keep alive the Great Yuan in the present. Such contests easily crossed borders. As Chapter 1 demonstrated, Mongolian diaspora communities were spread widely across Eurasia, including the Mongolian steppe, western Manchuria, and throughout Ming territory. In addition, some Mongolians became senior Ming military commanders and important advisors on political and military matters related to the steppe. Within the Ming polity, a small but visible portion of elite Chinese men rejected the Great Yuan's status in the succession of legitimate or

orthodox dynasties. In their eyes, the Mongols, as barbarians, were a blight to be eradicated not a predecessor to be emulated.[3]

Control of the Chinggisid Past

Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to control the narrative of the Chinggisids – their rise, their glory, and the demise. His efforts began before he took the throne and continued until his death. Even before Zhu Yuanzhang founded the Ming dynasty, he sought information about the Yuan's successes and failures. Once he established control in a region, he often summoned local scholars to his camp. He asked, "How initially did the Yuan gain the realm? How did it lose the realm?"[4] Such discussions were in part intended to win support among educated men. Zhu Yuanzhang showed them deference and demonstrated his sincere interest to establish a lasting polity that would emulate Chinggisid accomplishments but avoid its mistakes. In the years preceding the Ming dynasty's establishment, Zhu Yuanzhang consciously positioned himself as the Yuan dynasty's sole legitimate successor.[5] This strategy, in effect, only highlighted the Chinggisids' role as a central reference point, a hinge between past and future.

The Ming court's strong awareness of Chinggisids and their allies to the northeast, the north, the northwest, the west, and the southwest – that is in nearly every direction – meant that it had a vested interest in controlling the Yuan dynasty's history. Perhaps the most overt such effort was the imperially commissioned *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* (*Yuan shi*).[6] The great speed with which the *Official History* was compiled (completed in 331 days and less than three months after Toghan-Temür's death) is directly tied to the Ming court's desire to put the Yuan ruling house safely in the past.[7] Long-established custom held that only after one dynasty had fallen could its successor write its history. By compiling the Yuan dynasty's history, the Ming

[3] Fang Xiaoru is the most frequently cited early Ming period critic of the Mongols' political legitimacy. Similar critiques were mounted during the Song and Yuan periods. See Kim Yangsŏp, "Wŏnmal Myŏngch'o," pp. 126–31.

[4] Liu Xia, *Liu Shang bin*, 2.12b (*XXSK*, vol. 1326, p. 125). For a 1370 example, see *MTZSL*, 53.7a–b, pp. 1045–46.

[5] Liu Xia, *Liu Shang bin*, 2.11b (*XXSK*, vol. 1326, p. 125).

[6] Compilation of *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* served several ends, not least of which was recruitment of scholars who might otherwise have declined government service. Mote (*Poet Kao Ch'i*) is an early but still evocative account of one such scholar's experiences. See also Kim Yangsŏp, "Wŏnmal Myŏngch'o," pp. 22–25; Liang Caoya, "Yuanmo Mingchu Jiangnan," pp. 102–8.

[7] Fang Linggui, "*Yuan shi*," p. 161. For discussion of the Yuan period historical works the Ming editors likely used, see Hung, "Transmission of the Book," pp. 453–54, 459–60, 468–81.

court highlighted both the Chinggisids' demise and its own status as legitimate successor.[8] *Official History*'s completion was an assertion of imperial authority and legitimacy; it was also the Ming court's claim to an authoritative interpretation of the past.[9]

Scholar and eminent Ming minister, Song Lian (1310–81) noted that even in the midst of fighting, the celebrated Tang emperor, Taizong (598–649), had ordered his officials to compile *Official History of the Jin Dynasty* (*Jin shu*). Now that Zhu Yuanzhang had defeated his rivals and unified the realm, he too, like "rulers past and present who succeed in founding dynasties," would compile the history of the fallen regime and serve as an exemplar to the ages.[10] Elsewhere, Song Lian gushed that Zhu Yuanzhang's decision to compile the previous dynasty's history immediately upon taking the throne clearly showed that the emperor's farsighted intelligence exceeded all previous rulers.[11] Thus, by commissioning *Official History*, Zhu Yuanzhang claimed a place among China's greatest emperors.

The Ming court described the rise and fall of the Mongols in terms it found useful. *Official History* enthusiastically praised Qubilai as a decisive leader who, having won Heaven's support, unified long-divided Chinese territory and showed respect for Chinese political and cultural traditions.[12] Worthy ministers served the throne. Such a depiction was intended to strengthen the Yuan's standing as a fully legitimate dynasty supported by the Mandate of Heaven.[13] The narrative of the Great Yuan's last decades featured unmistakable augurs of doom. It provided clear examples of scheming, treasonous ministers, distracted and immoral rulers, and court women who wielded destructive levels of power. In other words, *Official History* offered historical evidence for the rise and the fall of Chinggisid power in the Central Plains; both parts of the story were essential to the early Ming court's political interests at home and abroad.

Finally, compilation of *Official History* provided an institutional vehicle to secure state documents, maps, and census materials, not only from imperial

[8] Chen Gaohua, "*Yuan shi* zuanxiu," p. 441; Wang Shenrong, *Yuanshi*, p. 26; Dardess, "Bibliographic Essay," in his "Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule," p. 717.

[9] For Zhu Yuanzhang's claim to be a teacher and model to his people, see Dardess, *Confucianism*, pp. 183–253.

[10] *SLQJ*, vol. 1, p. 343. For annotated English translation, see Cleaves, "Postscript to the Table of Contents." My translation varies slightly from Cleaves'.

[11] *SLQJ*, vol. 1, p. 476.

[12] For historians' views of Qubilai through the centuries, see Barrett, "Qubilai Qa–an and the Historians."

[13] In a short essay, Wang Wei, an editor of *Official History*, argued that the Yuan dynasty reunified the realm and restored the orthodox transmission of legitimate dynasties. See Wang Wei, *Wang Zhong wen gong ji*, 24.16b (*YWHJ*, vol. 5, p. 465). Wang Wei had previously served at the Yuan court, effusively praising its commitment to Confucian values. See, for instance, his celebratory piece on the Hall of Upholding the Root, where Ayushiridara received his education as Heir Apparent (*YWHJ*, vol. 5, p. 534–35).

archives and government offices in Daidu but also materials from the provinces.[14] Control of Yuan government records was a high priority for Zhu Yuanzhang. In the 1368 edict announcing the conquest of Daidu (and its new name as Beiping or "the North Pacified"), Zhu Yuanzhang explicitly noted that he had ordered his military commanders to secure works from the Imperial Library, the Imperial Academy, and the Imperial History Bureau. They also seized documents on topics ranging from astronomy and geography to maps and household registration. Those who turned over materials that "were lost or scattered among military and commoner households" to Ming government authorities could escape punishment.[15] Historians past and present have criticized Ming compilers for their sloppy editing and failure to effectively integrate Persian and Mongolian language materials into *Official History*. Nonetheless, the exercise guaranteed that the Ming court would decisively influence memory of the Yuan ruling house, both at the time and in succeeding centuries.[16] Even today, *Official History* remains the single most important source for the Yuan period in any language.

Detailed knowledge of the Yuan rulers, their strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures served Zhu Yuanzhang's interests of governance and control. It also provided compelling exactitude. As the sections to come show, Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers wove details of late Yuan court intrigue, political incompetence, and military failure into the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. Zhu Yuanzhang transmitted his story through edicts to his subjects, communications with the Yuan court on the steppe, letters to Chinggisid allies, edicts to neighboring rulers such as the king of Koryŏ, and instructions to his own descendants. Zhu Yuanzhang also sent envoys to his broadening audience, whenever possible selecting men familiar with local language, customs, and political actors. Such men included both long-standing supporters and those who had only recently transferred their allegiance to Zhu Yuanzhang. Before exploring the major themes in the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative, a few words are in order about the audience Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors sought to convince.

Audience

Scholars have outlined Zhu Yuanzhang's denunciations of the Yuan dynasty, but curiously few have considered questions of audience or motive.[17] Zhu

[14] *SLQJ* vol. 1, p. 476. [15] *HMZL*, 1. 14a, vol. 1, p. 43; *MTZSL*, 35.4b, p. 634.

[16] *Official History*'s importance as the dynasty's sole official chronicle explains in large part the intensity of protests by scholars who rejected the Yuan ruling house's legitimacy. See Wu Man, *Mingdai Songshixue*, pp. 19–27.

[17] Dardess (*Confucianism*) and Farmer (*Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation*) examine the particular form of Confucian ideology through which Zhu Yuanzhang sought to remake China.

Yuanzhang's proclamations are often treated as if they were soliloquies. However, he was always addressing an audience. It included members of the extended Chinggisid family, descendants of Qubilai, non-Chinggisid Mongol nobles, Yuan subjects, former Yuan subjects, and past (and potentially future) Yuan allies. Bearing in mind this varied audience allows us to reexamine the Ming dynasty's orientation on a wider stage. Similarly, if we consider why the same themes remained relevant for such a wide swath of east Eurasia, we appreciate anew the lasting importance of the Mongolian diaspora, the Chinggisid legacy, and the insights to be gained from thinking more systematically about the Chinggisids' successors from the Pacific to the Mediterranean.

In fact, Zhu Yuanzhang and his court were talking to several audiences, often simultaneously. At home, he was addressing educated men, both Chinese and those of foreign descent who had adopted literati values and lifeways. He was also writing for both former Yuan officials and those who had not held office but still felt loyal to the fallen house.[18] Mongols, Jurchens, Central Asians, Tibetans, and other men and women who through service in the Mongol empire had relocated to China often remained within the territory now claimed by Zhu Yuanzhang. In addition, Zhu Yuanzhang was speaking to northern and southern Chinese audiences that had experienced and remembered foreign regimes in different ways. Mongol rule had unified Chinese territories in the late thirteenth century, but the differences were enduring. Abroad, Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers attempted to sway members of the Yuan court on the steppe and its allies in northwest China, Manchuria, and Yunnan. A large but indeterminate number of Chinese men and women accompanied the Yuan court northward in 1368.[19] After a century of rule in Chinese lands, Chinggisid elites in the late fourteenth century were familiar with Chinese political rhetoric.[20] Even if they did not immediately appreciate the finer nuances of Zhu Yuanzhang's historical allusions, advisors familiar with the Chinese classical canon could explain his point. Smaller polities such as Hami to the west and the Koryŏ court and Jurchen groups to the east with current or previous ties to the Chinggisids were also important audiences for

Others have examined Zhu Yuanzhang's views on race and ethnic questions. Yet others have looked at his announcements in light of "conventional Chinese practice" in foreign relations. See Lam, "Notions behind Reconciliatory Attempts."

[18] Qian Mu, "Du kaiguo zhuchen shiwenji"; "Du kaiguo zhenchen shiwenji xupian"; Zhang Jia, *Xin tianxia*, pp. 19–43; Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing (Xiao Qiqing), "Yuan Ming zhiji de Menggu"; "Meng Yuan shidai Gaochang Xieshi"; Liu Pujiang, "Yuan Ming geming," pp. 82–84. See also Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 36–46.

[19] Qi Wenying, "Ming Hongwu."

[20] Franke, "Mongol Emperors Read"; Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing (Xiao Qiqing), "Lun Yuandai Mengruren." Dardess (*Conquerors and Confucians*, p. 2) argues that by the mid-fourteenth century, "the conquerors were now largely Confucian adherents themselves" and "Confucianism rose to be the controlling ideology of the state."

the early Ming court. Further abroad, in communications with the leaders of the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang regularly referred to the fortunes of the Great Yuan/Chinggisids. Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang invoked the Chinggisids in communications with Japan, which had escaped Mongol rule but had memories of Qubilai's abortive campaigns. The tone and content of Zhu Yuanzhang's communications with such diverse audiences varied by time and circumstances, but basic narrative motifs were surprisingly consistent.

Expired Fortune

One of the most dominant themes in the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative is the idea of *yun*. The Ming court did not invent the term; in fact it was not even the first to apply it to the Great Yuan.[21] *Yun*, meaning to move, rotate, or movement, appears in such early works as *Zhuang zi*. Later, it came to include such meanings as fortune, destiny, or allotted span of rule. The term and related concepts linked political developments to wider cosmic patterns of change.[22] A rough-and-ready keyword search in the world's most comprehensive database of premodern Chinese texts, Academia Sinica's Scripta Sinica, suggests *yun*'s use in conjunction with dynastic fortunes began to grow during the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Northern Song periods, that is, the seventh to tenth centuries. Statesmen and writers of the Song dynasty used the terms "fortunes of the northern horsemen" (*hu yun*) and "fortunes of the caitiff" (*lu yun*) to describe the allotted span of rule of the Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, often times to say that their power was on the wane. Drawing on the recent fall of the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234), others invoked the notion that fortunes of the barbarian or caitiff seldom exceed 100 years.[23] By no later than the Yuan period, *yun* became an established feature of political rhetoric, appearing in discussions of the fall of the Song, Liao, and Jin dynasties, whose histories were compiled by the Yuan imperial government during the first half of the fourteenth century.

[21] Like Zhu Yuanzhang, Qubilai and his advisors had worked to establish credibility in the face of challenges from a rival dynasty. For instance, the idea of quelling the "assembled heroes" (*qunxiong*), that is, rebel rivals that emerged as Yuan state control receded, appears in scores of documents issued by the Ming court. The same language appears in the Sinophone version of Qubilai's proclamation of his first reign name, issued in 1260. For the Chinese text and English translation, see Fiaschetti, "Tradition, Innovation and the Construction," p. 74.

[22] The connection between political change and cosmic patterns discernable through special expertise developed no later than the Warring States period, that is, the fifth to late third centuries BC. Early versions included numerological constructs and forms of *wuxing*, sometimes translated as "five phases." See Wang, *Cosmology*, pp. 75–128.

[23] Fang Zhenhua, "Yidi wu bainian zhi yun," pp. 169–75. Fang ("Yidi wu bainian zhi yun," pp. 161–68) traces notions related to "barbarian fortunes" from the Han to the Northern Song periods.

The Ming court's immediate predecessor and successor both unilaterally declared their rival at an end even as resistance continued. In 1276, the Mongol commander Bayan accepted the unconditional surrender of the Song emperor, Gongzong (r. 1274–76), sequestered him in alternate quarters, sealed the imperial treasuries and storehouses, and took possession of state papers, books, and other archives. Officials were dispatched to announce "Pacification of the Song" to the deities of Heaven and Earth and spirits of Chinggisid forefathers.[24] The following month, Qubilai ordered the compilation of *A Record of the Pacification of the Jin Dynasty* and *A Record of the Pacification of the Song Dynasty*.[25] The next year, Qubilai similarly announced that since the Jiangnan region had been pacified, the Song dynasty should be called "the fallen Song dynasty" (literally the "deceased Song dynasty").[26] Such announcements intentionally obscured the fact that Song loyalists continued to pose a military and political threat to the Chinggisids until 1279.[27] The eighteenth century editors of *The Official History of the Ming Dynasty* declared the Ming dynasty's demise in language that closely resembled how the early Ming described the Yuan dynasty's fall. In the memorial accompanying the submission of the completed *The Official History of the Ming Dynasty* to the Qing emperor, Zhang Tingyu (1672–1755) and his fellow editors wrote of the last Ming emperor's reign, "Court discipline was not vigorous. Once Heavenly support found its home and rebellion's flames burned bright, the fortune of the Ming came to the end of its course."[28] The Southern Ming court, which continued to claim the Mandate of Heaven for nearly two more decades, was thus consigned to oblivion.[29]

The End of Mongol Fortune

Beginning in the 1350s, several powerful warlords asserted that because the Great Yuan was a foreign dynastic house, its rule was fated to be brief. An advisor to one of Zhu Yuanzhang's chief rivals, the powerful Fang Guozhen (1319/20–74), wrote, "Yi and Di do not have the allotted span of rule of one hundred years. The Yuan's number will soon reach its limit."[30] The aspiring

[24] *YS*, 1.9.182. [25] *YS*, 1.9.183. [26] *YS*, 1.9.193.

[27] Cao Yongnian, "Mingdai Menggushi bianzuanxue," pp. 69–70; *Mingdai Menggushi*, p. 230.

[28] *MS*, 28.8530. Cited in Cao Yongnian, "Mingdai Menggushi bianzuanxue," pp. 69–70; *Mingdai Menggushi*, p. 231.

[29] For the Southern Ming, see Struve, "Southern Ming." For its military efforts, see Swope, *On the Trail of the Yellow Tiger*, chapters 5–8.

[30] *GQ*, 1.1.270. Tan Qian attributes these words to Huang Yuanshan. Fang Guozhen is also known as Fang Guzhen. In his inscription for Fang Guozhen written circa 1376, Song Lian attributes these words to Zhang Zishan, who Song identifies as a man from the same county as Fang Guozhen. See *SLQJ* (1999), p. 1148. Cited in Zuo Dongling, "Fang Guozhen shendao beiming," p. 88.

warlord Ming Yuzhen several times used similar language. In a 1360 announcement, he began with the statement, "The Yuan's fortune has already been lost." In the 1363 proclamation announcing the establishment of his Xia dynasty, he observed that the Yuan's "fortunes are in decline." Finally, in his 1364 communication with Zhu Yuanzhang, he similarly noted, "Recently, the Yuan's fortunes have been in decline."[31]

Liu Xia (1314–70), an advisor to the warlord Chen Youliang, argued that the collapse of political and social order could have a variety of causes, ranging from popular rebellion sparked by rulers' brutality, uprisings driven by starving people ignored by the state, and coups by powerful border commanders who saw weakness at court. "The cause of today's situation," Liu Xia observed circa 1358, "is not comparable to any of these."

> It is precisely because the fortunes of the Yi and Di will soon reach one hundred years. From antiquity, the rulers of the Yi Di have never had the fortune of one hundred years. Observing the realm, [we can see that] the court is empty and lacks men [of ability]. Most regions are left ungoverned. Heaven's heart has abandoned it. Its portents are already visible. The ruler and servitors of Our Dynasty clearly understand it as such. Thereupon, they advocate for the legitimate rule of the Imperial Song and sweep away the illegitimate place of the Yi and Di. To enumerate their transgressions, true gentlemen are out of power while venal men are at court; to enumerate their transgressions, corrupt officials and dirty clerks fill the capital and the provinces; to enumerate their transgressions, the stench of mutton [permeates] the Central Lands; to enumerate their transgressions, [they] rip to shreds caps and gowns [of educated men].[32]

Yi and Di were elastic, classical terms that designated peoples and polities different from Huaxia, Zhonghua, Zhongguo, and other words for what we might translate loosely as China. For Liu Xia, the Yuan dynasty's transgressions simultaneously illustrated and exacerbated its imminent collapse. At the same time that he posited a universal pattern of short-lived foreign regimes, suggestive of cosmic cycles, Liu paid careful attention to developments in the human realm. Ineffective rulership, corrupt administrative, and disruptive disregard for cultural traditions all resulted from human decisions. Liu gave greater weight to human agency, but his emphasis on the limited longevity of the Yuan's "fortune" conveys the inevitability of the Mongols' collapse, a potent rhetorical claim that many writers would emulate in the following decades.

Thus, when Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors chose fortune or allotted span of rule as a central rhetorical device in its Chinggisid narrative, they drew on

[31] *MSSL*, 6a, 7b, and 11b (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, pp. 627, 628, 630). One account of the Xia Dynasty attributed authorship of Ming Yuzhen's proclamations to a senior official, Liu Zhen. See *MSSL*, 17a (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 632).

[32] Liu Xia, *Liu Shang bin*, 3.6a–b (*XXSK*, vol. 1326, p. 136).

both distant precedents and contemporary usage. They did so in the belief that such ideas were familiar to their intended audience and would thus be found compelling. The notion that foreign rule would not last longer than a century had taken root during the thirteenth century in the wake of the Jurchen Jin dynasty's fall. It had then circulated in published works during the Yuan period.[33] They had no intention of forging new political slogans or developing new intellectual conceptualizations for the seizure of power. They wished to provide a satisfying justification for transferring allegiance from the Great Yuan to the Great Ming.

On the eve of the last major military push northward late in 1367, Zhu Yuanzhang distributed a lengthy announcement among North China's population. It presented the case why Great Yuan subjects should abandon their allegiance to the ruling government and instead offer support to Zhu Yuanzhang. It reads in part as follows.

> From antiquity, [when] rulers assumed governance over the realm, the Central State has occupied the interior and extended its control over the Yi and Di. The Yi and Di have occupied the exterior and governed the Central State from there. It was unheard of that the Yi and Di occupy the Central State and rule the realm. Since the Song fortunes collapsed, relying on the strength of the Yi and Di, the previous Yuan entered and ruled the Central State. Within the Four Seas and beyond, there was none that did not come in submission. How could this be the power of man? In truth, Heaven conferred it.[34]

Later in the same document, Zhu Yuanzhang further explained both the reason and solution for the age's chaos:

> Armies arose within the realm. Among the people of Our Central State, the dead have had their livers and brains splattered on the ground while among the living, fathers and sons have been scattered north and south and husbands and wives have been separated.[35] Although this has come about because of the affairs of man, in reality, this is the time when Heaven, detesting their virtue, has abandoned them. In antiquity, it was said that the northern horsemen caitiffs do not have the allotted span of rule of one hundred

[33] Fang Zhenhua, "Yidi wu bainian zhi yun," pp. 169–75.

[34] *DMTZ*, 7.5a, vol. 2, p. 163. The wording differs from the more widely circulated version of the edict, which is often called "An Announcement of War to the Central Plains." For instance, in this passage, the Yuan is called "the former Yuan," suggesting that the Yuan had already fallen by the time the announcement was issued. In other versions, "former" does not appear. See *HMZL*, 1.1.21; *MTZSL*, 26.10a–11b, pp. 401–4. For a slightly different translation based on a variant text, see Mote, *Imperial China*, p. 559. The announcement is commonly assumed to have been penned by Song Lian (1310–81), one of Zhu Yuanzhang's key political advisors. Liu Pujiang ("Yuan Ming geming," p. 96) shows why this is unlikely.

[35] Instead of the line about the separation of families, most versions of the announcement read "flesh and blood do not protect each other."

years. Examining this today, the saying is proved true. At this time, Heaven's Fortune has come round; the force of the Central Plains is strong.[36]

Zhu Yuanzhang here justifies his grab for power by appealing to Heaven's Mandate and the inescapable brevity of foreign rule.

In January, 1368, just days before the formal announcement of his new dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang returned to the end of Mongol fortunes and the Chinese people's need for a Chinese ruler.

> Whereas the ruler of the people of the Central State, when the Song's allotted span of rule ended, Lord-on-High commanded a True Man from the desert to enter the Central State as the realm's ruler. Their sovereigns and servitors, fathers and sons and grandsons [have continued] for more than one hundred years. Now their allotted span of rule has also ended.[37]

Two weeks later in a prayer text to Heaven and Earth announcing his dynasty's founding, Zhu Yuanzhang repeated verbatim the previous lines regarding the end of Mongol fortune.[38]

In the following years and decades, the termination of the Chinggisids' allotted span of rule remained a recurring theme in the Ming court's proclamations, reflecting concerns about the Great Yuan's potential revival. Zhu Yuanzhang and his court feared a Yuan dynastic revival and believed that many on the steppe and within Ming borders remained loyal to the Yuan ruling house. For instance, in 1377, reports reached Zhu Yuanzhang that men in the northern province of Shanxi were raiding on behalf of the "Fourth Great Prince of the former Yuan." The emperor announced that no one in Shanxi would willingly aid the Fourth Prince, who preyed upon border populations. Instead, explained Zhu Yuanzhang, the Fourth Great Prince had assembled remnants from the Yuan dynasty, established a mountain base, and recruited outlaws. Local bandits in Shanxi seldom merited the throne's special attention, but Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that these men be delivered to the capital for interrogation.[39] The emperor's explicit denial that the Great Yuan enjoyed local support

[36] *DMTZ*, 7.5b, vol. 2, p. 164; Zhu Yuanzhang, "Yu Zhongyuan xi," *HMZL*, 1.1.22–23. For slightly different translation, see Mote, *Imperial China*, p. 560. In his 1364 response to a letter from Zhu Yuanzhang, Ming Yuzhen (or more likely his speechwriter) had used similar language. He observed, "Recently the fortune of the Yuan is in decline. The force of the Central Plains is strong. Heaven is bound to bring down [to earth] a bold hero who will be ruler to the people." See *MSSL*, 11b (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 630).

[37] *HMZL*, 1.4a, vol. 1, p. 25; *MTZSL*, 28 *xia*.1a, p. 439; *GQ*, 2.1.350.

[38] *DMTZ*, 11.8a, vol. 2, p. 432; *MTZSL*, 29.1b, p. 478; *GQ*, 3.1.352.

[39] *MTZSL*, 112.4b–5a, pp. 1860–61; Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 42–43; "Were the Ming against the Mongols' Settling?" p. 138. Zhu Yuanzhang's response likely owes something to the fact that the previous year, in his famous "Ten-thousand word memorial," the official Ye Boju (d. late 1376 or early 1377), had linked the Ming state's inability to eradicate the threat of the Fourth Prince with its mistreatment of recently surrendered households in North China, including Shanxi province, where Ye held office. Ye's memorial, which criticized the emperor

suggests that he, his officials, and his subjects imagined exactly such a possibility. Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors endlessly repeated that the Chinggisids' allotted span of rule had expired with no possibility of recovery, the Yuan throne had decisively lost the Mandate of Heaven, and nearly all polities and peoples had already recognized such changes.

Mongol rule's limited span was interwoven into court pronouncements on topics largely unrelated to Chinggisid fortunes. An edict announcing the decision to establish dynastic capitals in Kaifeng and Nanjing observed, "Since the last years of [the] Zhao family's Song dynasty when the barbarians entered and ruled the Central State, it has already now been more than one hundred years. Their allotted span of rule too has come to an end."[40] In a 1369 edict on tax waivers in North China, the emperor wrote, "When I reflect that the Chinese should always be ruled by a Chinese sovereign, it is hard to believe that it has already been a hundred years since the northern horsemen occupied [these lands]."[41]

In sum, Zhu Yuanzhang highlighted the definitive termination of the Yuan ruling house's fortune or allotted span of rule. He wanted to rationalize and legitimize contemporaries' decision to shift their allegiance from the Yuan to the Ming dynasty. Heaven had brought the Yuan dynastic house's allotted span to an irreversible end and appointed Zhu Yuanzhang the realm's new ruler. To accept, even embrace, such a transformation was to follow Heaven's decree rather than to abandon one's dynasty or betray one's sovereign.

Native Revival

A secondary strategy for facilitating the transfer of allegiance was to cast the relationship between the Yuan and Ming ruling houses as one between foreign oppressor and native liberator. At several points in the 1367 proclamation just quoted, Zhu Yuanzhang highlights the suffering of "the people of Our Central State." He announced, "Among the Han people has just now been born a Sage (i.e. Zhu Yuanzhang) who is driving out the northern horsemen caitiffs and

for giving too much power and prestige to imperial princes, infuriated Zhu Yuanzhang. Ye died of starvation in prison. On Ye, see Frederick Mote, *DMB*, pp. 1572–76. For Ye's discussion of the Fourth Prince and the Ming state's inability to win the local population's trust and support, see *HMJS*, 8.7a–8b, vol. 1, p. 55. The memorial is also included in Cheng Minzheng, *Huang Ming wen heng*, 6.17a–b.

[40] *DMTZ* (1.2b, vol. 1, p. 168); *HMZL*, 1.5b, vol. 1, p. 28; *HMZZ*, 1.9a (*XXSK*, vol. 457, p. 538).

[41] *DMTZ,* 1.14a, vol. 1, p. 191; *Ming Taizu yu zhi wen ji*, 1.3b–4a, pp. 42–43; *HMZL*, 1.15a, vol. 1, p. 46; *MTZSL*, 38.10a–b, pp. 773–74. For full translation and brief commentary, see Robinson, "Celebrating War," pp. 110–11.

restoring China."[42] Elsewhere in the 1367 declaration, Zhu Yuanzhang repeats the themes of Chinese suffering and revival. He proclaims his determination to "drive out the northern horsemen caitiff, rescue the common people from their suffering, and restore the dignity of Han offices."[43] He draws attention to his success in "driving out the northern horsemen caitiffs and eliminating the violent and rebellious to wipe clean the Central State's humiliation."[44] In the same document, Zhu Yuanzhang criticizes the misguided ethnic allegiance of some warlords. "Today although there are several heroes in Henan and Shaanxi, they have forgotten the surnames of Central State forefathers and instead ally with the northern horsemen caitiffs. They consider the names of animals as admirable appellations."[45]

In communications with individuals, Zhu sometimes plays the ethnic allegiance card. He tries to persuade a powerful Yuan commander, Li Siqi, to abandon Toghan-Temür, by arguing that retreat into the steppe with the Yuan court could only end in Li's demise. Zhu insisted that the Mongols would inevitably betray Li's trust, because he was Chinese.[46] Later in a prayer text for Li Siqi, Zhu Yuanzhang similarly emphasizes ethnic allegiance, referring to "men of the Han" who abandoned their native lands to follow the northern horsemen as "enemies of Our Central State." In the end, Zhu observes, "their flesh fertilizes the wilds and their bones are consigned to the steppe." Li Siqi, in contrast, "thought of the land of his mother and father and remained loyal to his kind" and thus joined Zhu Yuanzhang.[47] Previously, in a letter to a rival warlord, Chen Youliang, Zhu Yuanzhang argues that "jointly chastising the Yi and Di (i.e. the foreign Yuan) to bring peace to the Central State" was the best choice for Chen, far preferable to fighting against other Chinese "neighbors."[48]

Zhu Yuanzhang did not take the people of North China's support for granted. Worried that they would follow the retreating Mongols northward into the steppe, in 1367 he issued clear orders that wherever his armies went, local people were forbidden to flee. "He who supports me," Zhu Yuanzhang promises, "will forever be at peace in the Central Lands. Those who defy me are exiling themselves beyond the pass." He amplifies:

> Further, the people of Our Central State, Heaven will certainly give birth to a man of Our Central State to put them at peace. How could Yi and Di acquire and rule them? . . .

[42] *DMTZ*, 7.6a, vol. 2, p. 165. The version contained in the *Ming Veritable Records* and elsewhere reads, "Among the millions of people." It does not distinguish Chinese and Mongols as separate categories of people.
[43] *DMTZ*, 7.6b, vol. 2, p. 166. [44] *DMTZ*, 7.7a, vol. 2, p. 167.
[45] *DMTZ*, 7.6a, vol. 2, p. 165; *MTZSL*, 26.11a, p. 403.
[46] *DMTZ*, 7.6a, vol. 2, p. 165. A slightly abridged version appears in *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1622. See also *DMTZ*, 7.26a–b, vol. 2, pp. 205–6.
[47] *DMTZ*, 11.26b–27a, vol. 2, pp. 468–69; *Ming Taizu yu zhi wen ji*, 20.2b, p. 572.
[48] *DMTZ*, 7.10a, vol. 2, p. 173.

As for the Mongols and people of various kinds (*semu*),[49] although they are not of the Chinese kin, they are nonetheless born like us between Heaven and Earth. If there are those who can understand ritual and righteousness and who are willing to be servitors and subjects, they will be looked after no differently than the people of China.[50]

Throughout his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang returned to his success in ending Chinese suffering and reviving Chinese culture and values.[51] In a 1376 edict announcing a tax waiver for Shanxi and Shaanxi, Zhu Yuanzhang highlighted the theme of revival, declaring, "From 1367, [We] recovered Our Central Lands and succeeded to the seat of Our sages."[52] In a 1383 edict announcing a tax waiver for Shanxi, Zhu Yuanzhang recalled, "Driving the northern horsemen beyond the pass and reviving the gowns and caps of Our China."[53]

Although Zhu Yuanzhang and contemporary writers often did describe the Yuan as an oppressive foreign ruling house, such a characterization was not dominant at the early Ming court. Securing the allegiance of men who viewed the Yuan and Ming ruling houses as rival powers contending for legitimacy and political control was more pressing than winning over those who cast the

[49] Haw ("Semu ren") highlights the diversity of peoples encompassed by the term "people of various categories," that is, *semu ren*.

[50] *DMTZ*, 7.6a–7a, vol. 2, pp. 165–66. Slightly different versions of the edict are found in *HMZL,* 1.1.16 (page missing in this edition); *MTZSL*, 26.10a–11b, pp. 401–4. See also *GQ*, 2.1.345. In a 1377 edict Zhu Yuanzhang strikes a similar note. See *DMTZ*, 1.28a, vol. 1, p. 219. A rare extant example of Zhu Yuanzhang's calligraphy is his 1367 order to commanders leading the campaign in North China. In it, Zhu Yuanzhang congratulates his men for their repeated victories but worries about the large number of captured senior "secretariat and bureau officials from the north." If they suffered injuries inflicted by enemy troops or were robbed by thieves while in Zhu's army's camp, they would grow disaffected. He ordered that his commanders immediately deliver them to his capital at Yingtian, entertaining them during the journey. Zhu instructed his officers that such senior officials would be difficult to replace quickly. Zhu stated explicitly that he wished to win their allegiance so that "later they might be used with absolutely no harm to us." The order ("Order of the Great Army" 大軍帖) is held at the Palace Museum, Beijing. See Ma Shunping ("Ming Taizu chuanshi," pp. 103–4; Wang Zhaoyu, "Ming Taizu moji," p. 97) for transcription of the text and discussion of the calligraphy. In other cases, Zhu Yuanzhang issued sharply different treatment of enemy prisoners. Overwhelmed with dealing with more than 60,000 defeated troops of rival Zhang Shicheng, Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly ordered local commanders to "quietly liquidate them on site" without regard to whether they were officers or common soldiers. The orders survive in a text often attributed to Zhu Yuanzhang variously entitled "Xing shu shou yu" or "Wu Wang shouyujuan," which is held at Wuxi Municipal Musuem. The order is reproduced and discussed in Ma Shunping, "Ming Taizu chuanshi," pp. 102–3. Wang Zhaoyu ("Ming Taizu moji," pp. 98–100) argues that the calligraphy is too polished to be the product of Zhu Yuanzhang's pen. Chen Gaohua ("Shuo Zhu Yuanzhang," p. 515) has drawn attention to the yawning gap between the casual brutality of these orders and the anodyne depiction found in the corresponding passage of the *Ming Veritable Records*.

[51] In a 1360 announcement to the people of Sichuan, Ming Yuzhen also promised restoration of Chinese civilization and urged his audience not to accept the Yuan dynasty's base customs. See *MSSL*, 8a (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 628).

[52] *DMTZ*, 1.19a, vol. 1, p. 201. [53] *DMTZ*, 1.22b, vol. 1, p. 208.

issue as foreign oppressor and native liberator.[54] Many educated, propertied men had actively resisted groups that challenged Yuan authority during the 1350s and 1360s.[55] For this reason, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors appealed to the authority of a transcendent Heaven rather than relying on ethnic allegiance. Zhu Yuanzhang was trying to convince his various audiences – Chinese literati, common farmers, Mongol elites, educated Central Asians, and others serving the Great Yuan – that the Mongols' day was really over. Equally important, he was assuring former subjects of the Yuan that they had a place in the new Ming order. In one 1368 edict, Zhu Yuanzhang promised them, "Those Mongols and people of various kinds (*semu*) who already live within Our lands are Our children. Those who indeed have ability will without exception be appointed to office."[56]

Historians in recent decades sometimes assume that the Yuan's fall in 1368 was inevitable and that everyone at the time was fully convinced of the fact. As a result, they underestimate the Yuan court's continuing power and aura of legitimacy at the time. Zhu Yuanzhang, however, never enjoyed such a luxury.

Justifying Rebellion

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors sometimes claimed that the Great Yuan was a foreign blight to be eliminated, but more often they accepted the Yuan dynasty's political legitimacy. This meant that Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors needed to justify rebellion. Before and after founding the Ming dynasty in 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote letters to the powerful Yuan general, Köke-Temür (d. 1375), attempting to persuade him to abandon his allegiance to the Great Yuan court and to join Zhu.[57] In one such letter from 1365, Zhu Yuanzhang defended his seizure of a large swathe of territory. He insisted, "these cities may be the former lands of the Yuan, but they have long been in other people's hands. I acquired them from other people. I did not take them

[54] Chen Gaohua ("Yuanmo nongmin qiyizhong nanfang," pp. 270–80) shows that most educated Chinese landholding elites did not view the Yuan ruling house as an oppressive alien dynasty to be rejected or resisted on racial or ethnic grounds, however, some did resent limited opportunities for advancement in the imperial government because of pronounced state preferences for Mongolian, Central, and Northeast Asian personnel.

[55] Chen Gaohua, "Yuanmo Zhedong dizhu"; Dardess, "Transformations of Messianic Revolt."

[56] *XLZC*, in *MCKG*, vol. 4, p. 1843.

[57] One of these letters or "edicts" is included in the mid-sixteenth-century literary compendium *Huang Ming wen heng* by Cheng Minzheng (1.5b–6a). According to Cheng's attribution, the official Wang Wei (1323–73) drafted the edict for Zhu Yuanzhang. Although not included in the Chongzhen (1628–44) edition of Wang Wei's collected works, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* (rpt. *YWHJ*, *ji bu*, vol. 19), the edict appears in *HMJS*, 4.12b–13a, vol. 1, pp. 31–32. The edict appears in *HMZL*, 1.34a–b, vol. 1, pp. 79–80.

from the Yuan."[58] Here, Zhu argues that contemporary warlords such as Zhang Shicheng, Chen Youliang, and others had already wrested control of such cities from the Great Yuan. Zhu Yuanzhang thus had not usurped Yuan authority but instead occupied rebel territory.[59] One month after declaring the establishment of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang described his generals' victories in North China against Yuan imperial armies as "the suppression of rebellion in China."[60]

Shortly after having established the dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang made the same point in nearly identical language, this time to his own court. In 1370, Zhu Yuanzhang asked his ministers why the Yuan dynasty had failed and why he had succeeded. Answering his own question, the emperor first noted the myriad problems of the day – a lackadaisical ruler, poor dynastic finances, excessive taxation, repeated droughts and floods, and rampant banditry – before observing:

> We had no choice but to raise troops to protect Ourself. In time the troops' strength grew daily, and [We] chastised those in the east and punished those in the west, extirpating the warlords and opening territories. At that time, the Yuan no longer held the realm … We secured the realm from the hands of the Assembled Heroes. [The realm] was not in the hands of the Yuan. Today [We] have obtained its remaining descendants. If it were not for fortune bestowed by Heaven, how could this have come to pass? The *Book of Poetry* writes, "The descendants of the sovereigns of Shang, were in number more than hundreds of thousands; But when Lord-on-High gave the command, They became subject to Zhou." The Mandate of Heaven is such; it is to be feared.[61]

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors felt vulnerable to charges of treason and disloyalty. In a 1370 edict, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote almost plaintively, "We were a Yuan subject. The chaos within the realm did not begin with Us."[62]

[58] 7.45a, vol. 2, p. 243; *MTZSL*, 17.5a. The letter was included in later compendia. See *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1618; Qian Qianyi (1582-1664), *Guo chu qun xiong shi lüe*, *juan* 11, p. 246. In a 1360 announcement, the warlord Ming Yuzhen expressed a similar sentiment. "I took your Shu (Sichuan) from the hands of the Green Turbans; I did not take it from the Yuan." See *MSSL*, 6a (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 627).

[59] Using similar reasoning in a 1369 letter to Toghan-Temür, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote that when Yuan forces failed to suppress Red Turban rebels, the "assembled heroes" rose up. "At that juncture," the emperor observed, "Heaven's Fortune was manifestly clear; it was visible without need for explanation." See *MTZSL*, 46.10a–b, pp. 925–26.

[60] Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Hongwu yubi*, rpt. in *Gugong zhoukan* 104 (October, 1931), p. 3.

[61] *MTZSL*, 53.7a–b, pp. 1045–46; Yu Jideng (1544–1600), *Dian gu ji wen*, *juan* 2, p. 53; anonymous, *Bei ping lu*, *GCDG*, *juan* 7, p. 162; Xu Xueju, *Guo chao dian hui*, *juan* 1, p. 95. The *Book of Poetry* quotation is from part three, "Greater Odes of the Kingdom." The translation is slightly modified from Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV; *The She King*, p. 430.

[62] *DMTZ*, 2.7a, vol. 1, p. 247. A version of this edict is found under the title "Feng Yuan you sun wei Chongyi hou zhao" in *XLZC* (*MCKG*, vol. 4, pp. 1873–78). Although marred by several scribal orders, this version contains specific measures that are omitted in the *DMTZ* edition.

To convince contemporary audiences that Zhu Yuanzhang was an instrument of heaven and not a rebel, the early Ming court stressed that Zhu Yuanzhang seized the realm not from the ruling house but from warlords.[63] In fact, Zhu Yuanzhang justified his attack on contemporary rivals such as Zhang Shicheng and Fang Guozhen as punishment for their disloyalty to the Great Yuan.[64] When in 1366 Zhu Yuanzhang enumerated Zhang Shicheng's eight "crimes," the first seven related to Zhang's betrayal of the Great Yuan.[65] Taking Fang Guozhen to task, Zhu wrote, "When you first took up arms, the Yuan dynasty enjoyed peace within the realm. Who would have dared declare rebellion? Only you raised soldiers."[66]

Zhu Yuanzhang's explicit and repeated denial that he had seized territory from the Yuan dynasty or betrayed his sovereign was intended to legitimate his rule. Such legitimation was essential to persuade audiences at home and abroad that he deserved their allegiance and support. Rather than a treasonous rebel, Zhu Yuanzhang was instead a Heaven-appointed instrument through which order and stability would be restored on the Central Plains.[67] In 1397, one year before he died, Zhu Yuanzhang reviewed his rise and defended his choices. "The contenders of the time were all dissolute scoundrels, men of the commonest ability. However, the Yuan was unable to control even such scoundrels. Only then did I" order generals into battle with the warlords.[68]

[63] Chen Gaohua ("Lun Zhu Yuanzhang," pp. 322–25) notes that as late as 1364, Zhu Yuanzhang considered a rapprochement with the Great Yuan and that Zhu repeatedly stressed that he had not seized power from the Yuan. Another strategy for deflecting culpability for rebellion was to focus on the "results of the movement of *qi*" or more loosely "it was caused by destiny." See *DMTZ*, 7.14b, vol. 2, p. 182.

[64] Chen Gaohua, "Yuanmo nongmin qiyizhong nanfang," p. 283.

[65] Chen Gaohua, "Lun Zhu Yuanzhang," pp. 323–24. For the enumeration of Zhang Shicheng's offenses, see *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1615–16; *HMZL*, *juan* 1, 11–18 (the Chengwen chubanshe edition pagination is out of order; pp. 15–16 contain part of a different edict); *XXSK*, *shi* 458, pp. 31–32; *MTZSL*, *juan* 23. One letter to Zhang Shicheng is included in *DMTZ* (7.18b–19a, vol. 2, pp. 190–91), but not the victory notice. For textual variants, see Du Hongtao, "*Yan-shantang*." In contrast, only one of the twelve transgressions with which Zhu Yuanzhang charged rival warlord Fang Guozhen involved betrayal of the Yuan dynasty. The rest were violations of Zhu Yuanzhang's trust.

[66] *DMTZ*, 7.19b, vol. 2, p. 912; *MTZSL* 23.5a, p. 333.

[67] Liu Ji, *Liu Bowen ji* (10.1.218) explains the relation between Zhu Yuanzhang and other contemporary rebels in the years prior to the Ming dynasty's establishment. "I have heard that when Heaven commands the true ruler to unify the six regions, it will always first drive off [enemies] and then gather up [the regions] to return them to the basket." In other words, even rival warlords were part of Heaven's plan to reunify the realm under its chosen agent, here Zhu Yuanzhang.

[68] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 110; Zhang Dexin, pp. 103). In a 1379 letter to his sons, Zhu Yuanzhang writes, "Once the ruler of the northern horsemen Yuan fled faraway, We assembled a righteous army." In other words, he claims that he raised an army only after Toghan-Temür's flight from Daidu in the fall of 1368! See *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 74; Zhang Dexin, p. 86).

Marginality

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors could not wish away the well-known presence of Great Yuan nobles and their supporters on the steppe. The early Ming court did, however, strive to marginalize them through two rhetorical strategies. The first was to highlight the Great Yuan's physical marginality. The second was to cast the Great Yuan as an isolated outlier in its refusal to acknowledge Zhu Yuanzhang's exclusive possession of Heaven's Mandate.

Ming court writers repeatedly drew attention to the Yuan's withdrawal from the Central Plains to the steppe, which they cast as distant, desolate lands. In the edict announcing the seizure of Daidu in October 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote that "the northern horsemen ruler had fled faraway" and Ming troops have taken the city without inflicting even the slightest harm on the people. Later in the same document he again noted, "The Yuan ruler, father and son, have fled faraway to the steppe."[69] To dissuade a Chinese military commander from retreating northward with the Yuan emperor, Toghan-Temür, Zhu Yuanzhang argued that the commander's Chinese followers would revolt rather than settle in the steppe wastelands.[70] Elsewhere Zhu writes, "We have heard that the lands of the boreal steppe are vast and limitless; animals mostly fly and plants are mostly withered grass."[71] In his report to the throne on his victory over the Yuan court at Yingchang on the steppe, the Ming commander Li Wenzhong (1339–84) writes, "The Imperial Wind has spread far, reaching to the desolate distances. The fortune of the northern horsemen is completely at an end on this day." Later Zhu Di's court would further develop this line of rhetoric, characterizing the steppe as not only distant and desolate but also chaotic and brutal. Such descriptions' implicit contrast was an ordered Central State ruled by a legitimate dynastic house that ensured people's livelihood and proper moral values. Early Ming writers used such verbs as "flee," "abscond," and "scurry" to describe the Yuan court's movement to and on the steppe.

Much early Ming period rhetoric holds that abandoning the capital at Daidu and departing the Central Plains was tantamount to forfeiting claims to control of China and political legitimacy more generally. One literatus, Lin You,

[69] *MTZSL*, 35.4a, p. 633.

[70] *DMTZ*, 7.2.204–5; *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1622. Once stranded in the steppe, Zhu argued, Li would be helpless to defend his family's graves in Henan, located in central China. Zhu Yuanzhang knew that men like Li Siqi received envoys from both the Great Yuan and Great Ming courts. In the letter just cited, Zhu speculates about why his envoys had failed to return from Li Siqi's base. "Perhaps it is because Yuan envoys were there and you, being unable to hide [the arrival of Ming envoys], eliminated them (*DMTZ*, 7.15a–b, vol. 2, pp. 203–4)."

[71] *DMTZ*, 16.14a–15a, vol. 3, pp. 187–88; *Ming Taizu yuzhi wenji*, *juan* 16, pp. 532–33; *Ming quan wen*, *juan* 14, p. 245–46. Despite the bleak opening description just quoted, Zhu went on to offer a more evenhanded depiction of steppe life–hardy riders, plentiful hunting, epic winter storms, and the harrowing threat of starvation.

explicitly denounced the Great Yuan for clinging to formal administrative titles even after they had lost the Central Plains. "They no longer hold the Central State," Lin wrote, "yet they establish empty names to their officials and establish government posts of the Central States for them to occupy."[72]

Lin You and other writers described the Yuan court on the steppe as a mass of unruly "remnant bastards" clawing out a desperate existence on the vast, northern wastelands. They might be biological descendants of Chinggis, Qubilai, and Toghan-Temür, but they were most emphatically NOT his political successors. Another early Ming writer explicitly addressed such a relationship, writing, "The altar of the Yuan has been housed; the descendants still survive."[73] The Yuan dynasty had fallen and its altar no longer received sacrifices, but the ruling house's biological descendants remained at large.

The second element of the early Ming court's marginalization of the Chinggisids involved casting them as political outliers. Like many other dynasties, the Ming held that most peoples and polities acknowledged its exclusive possession of Heaven's Mandate. Imperial edicts written for audiences at home and abroad repeated the refrain that all under heaven sent envoys and gifts to the Ming throne; officials echoed such assertions in their memorials to the throne. In fact, such language could be found in private writings. In a commemorative essay for a civil official about to leave his comfortable position in an imperial library in Nanjing to take up a post in a military garrison in Gansu, the western edge of Ming territory, the senior court minister Song Lian observed,

> Now the August Ming is in charge. Wherever its Heavenly awe reaches is like thunder and lightning. The peoples of the Western Regions, who bow their heads and declare themselves servants of the throne, fill the roads one after the other. But the descendants of the Yuan ruler absconded to the steppe, where they eke out a precarious existence, terrified and only concerned with survival. Who among them would dare direct even a single arrow eastward?[74]

Such a rhetorical stance was intended to bolster dynastic standing (and to reassure a frantic scholar ordered to the perilous frontier!). After all, only a virtuous ruler at the head of a legitimate dynasty could earn such universal recognition. The claim was also strongly normative. To recognize Zhu Yuanzhang and his successors was the correct and natural response. Anyone who failed to do so was by definition aberrant, both in the sense of being a small minority and in terms of violating proper moral and political standards. They were also bound to fail.

[72] Lin You, *Tiantai* (*SKCM*, *ji* 27, p. 560); Seikadō Bunko edition, 18b.
[73] He Qiaoyuan, *Huang Ming wen zheng*, 6.5b (*SKCM*, *ji* 328, p. 159).
[74] *SLQJ*, vol. 2, p. 808.

Officials drew on the language of the Great Yuan's marginality to sharpen the rhetorical edge of arguments on other apparently unrelated topics. When in 1385 the Chancellor of the Dynastic University submitted a memorial outlining plans for agricultural colonies on the borders, he addressed continuing fears of the Chinggisid threat. He wrote,

> Today the realm has already been pacified. The Man and Yi submit tribute. Only the northern horsemen caitiffs of the steppe still provoke Your Sage concern. If not resolved, [Your Minister] fears they will in time became a catastrophe.[75]

What gave teeth to such invocations was that the Great Yuan court and its allies did represent a grave military and political threat to the Ming court's authority and appeal. The Great Yuan court retained a measure of prestige and served as a potential source of patronage.

Edges of the Chinggisid Narrative

As the preceding shows, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors spent much of his reign crafting the topoi of fortune or allotted span of rule, marginality, Chinese revival, and the unbridgeable gap between Great Yuan emperors and their post-1368 descendants – that constituted the Ming court's core Chinggisid narrative. In some circumstances, however, such rhetoric played almost no role in descriptions of contemporary Mongols. The following section is drawn from several imperial collections of Zhu Yuanzhang's writings. This genre of writing offers us three insights. First, it reminds us of the Mongols' importance in early Ming governance. Zhu Yuanzhang frequently refers to Mongol personnel within the ranks of the Ming polity, especially its military forces. Second, it rounds out our understanding of Zhu Yuanzhang's perception of the Great Yuan and its personnel as practical administrative or military issues to be solved rather than the focus of discursive strategy. This does not mean value-neutral statements. Zhu Yuanzhang both valued his new Mongol subjects and worried about what problems they might cause. Finally, it throws into relief that the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative was a deliberately crafted rendition of the Great Yuan court and its significance. The Chinggisid narrative is one side of the early Ming court's multifaceted understanding of the Great Yuan and its personnel.

An Imperial Record of the Emperor the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty 明太祖皇帝欽錄 is a unique manuscript held at the Palace Museum in Taipei. It consists of 106 letters from Zhu Yuanzhang to five sons who commanded military forces along the northern border. The letters date from the 1390s, that is, the last decade of his reign. The compilation explicitly addresses

[75] *MTZSL*, 171.1b, p. 2594; *GQ*, 8.1.650.

his sons' many, often violent, crimes. It also includes detailed instructions on everything from livestock management to moral propriety.[76] In this uncensored and unpolished set of letters, the emperor focuses on pragmatic matters of dealing with Mongols as allies and enemies. Zhu Yuanzhang orders the Prince of Jin to submit precise counts of the number of Mongol commanders-in-chief, commanders, chiliarchs, centurions, judges, and soldiers to be deployed to Kaiping, the new name for Shangdu.[77] When Mongol commanders arrive at a prince's court, they are to be wooed with good food, wine, and rewards of cash, he orders.[78] When units of Mongols troops of 10,000 men are incorporated into the Ming armies, Zhu Yuanzhang commands, units of Chinese troops of comparable size are to be established.[79] He instructs provincial military authorities to care for the needs of Mongol soldiers under their command; at the same time those authorities are to avoid stationing them in key border passes, presumably for fear of divulging military secrets.[80] Elsewhere the emperor is blunter: "Item: be on guard with northern horsemen in the ranks. On the surface, work to win their support; behind the scenes, plan carefully in preparation."[81] In the next chapter, we will return to this particular call for vigilance.

Zhu Yuanzhang omits references to the Yuan dynasty and the Chinggisid house in the orders preserved in *An Imperial Record of the Emperor the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty*. He refers to the Mongol noble Ajashiri not as the Prince of Liao or a member of the Yuan ruling house as he did elsewhere (see Chapter 9) but as "Ajashiri the Uriyangkhad," who was planning to raid the grain stores of two Ming princely houses along the northern border.[82] Based on what he observed in the heavens, in 1397, Zhu Yuanzhang concludes that a major Mongol attack was imminent. He orders his son on the border to intensify military drills, post sentries well beyond Ming bases, and guard against Mongols who claim to come in surrender but actually are gathering intelligence on Ming defenses. The emperor also discusses the details of fortifications, troop formation, and logistics related to horses.[83] He worries about his poorly prepared sons; they are sure to be overwhelmed by what he predicts is an imminent and massive Mongol incursion hurtling southward on

[76] Chang Bide, "*Taizu huangdi qinlu*," pp. 71–72. Chang appends a reproduction of the entire text (pp. 71–112). See also Chan, "Guanyu *Ming Taizu*," pp. 76–86; Chen Gaohua, "Shuo Zhu Yuanzhang," pp. 515–17; Zhang Dexin, "*Taizu huangdi qinlu* jiqi faxian," pp. 83–84, 104–8. Ninety-six of the 106 letters were to his son, the Prince of Jin.
[77] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, pp. 103–5; Zhang Dexin, p. 100).
[78] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 78; Zhang Dexin, p. 88).
[79] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p.79; Zhang Dexin, p. 88).
[80] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p.79; Zhang Dexin, p. 89).
[81] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p.85; Zhang Dexin, p. 91).
[82] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 102; Zhang Dexin, p. 99).
[83] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, pp. 106–8; Zhang Dexin, pp. 101–2).

100,000 superlative steads.[84] Recalling his own miscalculation in ordering Ming troops deep into the steppe to attack Qara-Qorum in 1372, he fears that his sons will be similarly lured in a disastrous trap.[85]

In other words, until the very end of his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang remained keenly interested in Mongols, both as members of his imperial army and as a military threat to the northern border. He repeatedly refers to them in communications with his sons. However, such documents evince scant interest in the rhetorical topoi so evident in other writings on the Great Yuan. The absence of the Chinggisid narrative in Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence with his sons and border commanders might be explained in terms of time. By the 1390s, Zhu Yuanzhang had either defeated or co-opted the leading Yuan commanders active in the territory claimed by the Ming, and the Yuan ruling house was in shambles. Thus, one might argue that the fullest form of the Chinggisid narrative was no longer essential.[86] However, the end of the Great Yuan was far from obvious to contemporaries. Zhu Yuanzhang remained worried about the Great Yuan until the very end of his life. His son and eventual successor Zhu Di devoted much of his reign in the early fifteenth century to war with newly ascendant Mongol polities headed by Chinggisid descendants.

The more likely explanation is the nature of *An Imperial Record*. The majority of its texts are relatively short sets of instructions and demands for further information. Zhu Yuanzhang's lengthier communications in *An Imperial Record* are almost entirely devoted to upbraiding his sons for their venality, incompetence, and depravity. The documents preserved in *An Imperial Record* show that in his communications with his sons, apropos Mongols, Zhu Yuanzhang was far more interested in instruction than persuasion. Similarly, in letters to his sons preserved in another unique imperial collection, *The Brush of the Hongwu Emperor* (*Hongwu yubi* 洪武御筆) held at the Palace Museum, Zhu Yuanzhang mentions Mongols exclusively as administrative or personnel issues within the

[84] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, pp. 109–11; Zhang Dexin, pp. 102–3).
[85] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 111; Zhang Dexin, pp. 103).
[86] However, as early as August 1369, we see discussion of the Great Yuan shorn of a Chinggisid narrative. In a letter to his brother-in-law (the husband of his older sister), Zhu Yuanzhang thanked Li Zhen for the gift of a writing brush for the heir apparent and updated him on the successes of Li Zhen's son, the military commander Li Wenzhong, against the Yuan army. Not only had Ming forces defeated Yuan troops north of Beiping, they seized more than 1,000 horses and captured approximately 300 Yuan officials. As a result, "the Tatar emperor left for the grasslands." See Zhu Yuanzhang, "Zhi fuma Li Zhen shou chi juan," held at the Palace Museum, Beijing. Reproduced in Ma Shunping, "Ming Taizu chuanshi," p. 105. The corresponding report preserved in the *Ming Veritable Records*, "the Yuan ruler had absconded northward," uses the language of flight common in the court's Chinggisid narrative. See *MTZSL*, 43.2b, p. 486.

context of the Ming military.[87] The Chinggisid narrative's conspicuous absence in family letters serves as a reminder that its prominence elsewhere should be understood as a deliberate effort to persuade audiences at home and abroad.

Finally, several short poems attributed to Zhu Yuanzhang offer yet another depiction of the Mongols. Here they are named "northern horsemen" or "northern tribesmen" whose connection to the Great Yuan or Chinggisid empire is left undefined.[88] The three examples to follow appear in a rare manuscript palace edition of Zhu Yuanzhang's writings entitled *A Collection of Writings by the Grand Progenitor Emperor of the Great Ming* 大明太祖皇帝御製集. In the first two poems, Zhu Yuanzhang describes the Mongols as northern horsemen defeated in military battle by Ming imperial armies. In the third poem, Zhu identifies the northern horsemen as the primary enemy against which dynastic forces prepare. The specific context in which these particular poems were composed is unclear, but such works were commonly produced at gatherings between the emperor and high officials at court. Sometimes they celebrated imperial victories over dynastic enemies. One of the three poems explicitly mentions the "plains around Lake Buir," site of a major Ming victory over the Great Yuan in 1388 (see Chapter 6). In other words, they were as much political as literary expression. Earlier I suggested that the absence of reference to the Great Yuan or Chinggisids in *An Imperial Record* and *The Brush* reflected Zhu Yuanzhang's understanding of Mongols as a military and personnel issue that his sons should manage with clear-eyed efficiency. In the poems, the same omission should be explained differently. Zhu Yuanzhang depicts the Mongols as an external military threat to be vanquished on the battlefield rather than as a rival polity whose political legitimacy challenged the Ming court's claims. Use of the term "northern

[87] In an undated letter to his second son, the Prince of Qin, Zhu Yuanzhang directed the prince to transfer Mongol troops from Yan'an and Qingyang to the capital in Nanjing. He also instructed the Prince of Qin and one other commander to conduct a discreet investigation of 122 former Yuan military officers who had "hidden their names" or disguised their identities in a Yuan military units (a *tammachi*) that had been settled in Yan'an and nearby places. See Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Hongwu yubi*, rpt. in *Gugong zhoukan* 101 (September 1931), p. 2. *The Brush of the Hongwu Emperor* (or *The Brush of the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty Ming Taizu yubi* 明太祖御筆) is a collection in two volumes of seventy-four undated writings of various lengths ostensibly in the hand of Zhu Yuanzhang. During the Wanli reign, a member of the Grand Secretariat, Shen Shixing, selected Zhu Yuanzhang's orders (plus three poems and one miscellaneous piece) from those on file at court, bound them, and presented them to the Wanli emperor. See Suo Yuming, "Ming Taizu yubi," pp. 16–17. Scholars debate whether the calligraphy in the compilation is actually the product of Zhu Yuanzhang's own hand. For review and argument that the calligraphy is not Zhu Yuanzhang's, see Ma Shunping, "*Ming Taizu yubi*."

[88] For Zhu Yuanzhang's literary engagement, including literary interactions with his officials, see Zhang Dexin, "Zhu Yuanzhang shiwen." As Zhang notes (p. 216), officials at the time lavishly, even cravenly, praised Zhu Yuanzhang's writing style.

horsemen" in all three poems minimizes and marginalizes the Great Yuan; it denies through silence.

"The Great Commanders Return from Campaign"

> The great commanders have quelled the northern horsemen,
> all within the seas is calmed.
> Martial melodies songs and cooking pots,
> are put away as [the army] returns to its garrison.
> [North and south] the Heavenly Boulevard stars,
> both the steppe warriors and border troops,
> Their swords and halberds are silent.
> Throughout the mountains and rivers where Yu trod,
> the sun and moon are brilliant.
> The northern tribesmen raise their whips,
> the clouds leave the forts.
> At the Pine Pavilion,[89] the soldiers pull up on their reins,
> their eyes follow the pennants.
> Chinese and foreigners one and all,
> receive the emperor's blessings.[90]

"The Steppe is Emptied"

> The fires of the steppe are extinguished,
> only the clouds are dark.
> The camels head south,
> they are sold for gold.
> Traces of combat on the battlefield,
> have now grown over with brambles.
> The flying eagles on the steppe,
> began in the thick forests.
> The Elm Valley[91] reaches to the skies,
> the Passes are narrow.
> The plains around Lake Buir,
> its sources of water are deep.
> The Six Armies summon their courage,
> to empty the northern horsemen wilds.
> In the vast dried grasses,
> a sole distant mountain.[92]

"Military Review"

> In the valleys south of Mt. Zhongshan,
> I inspect the soaring eagles.

[89] During the Ming period, Pine Pavilion was a key fortified pass along the northern border.
[90] *DMTZ*, 17.6b, vol. 3, p. 352.
[91] Elm Valley appears in Sima Qian's *Shi ji* (*juan* 111, vol. 9, pp. 2924–25, fn. 10), where it is glossed as the name of a fort/pass 塞.
[92] *DMTZ*, 17.6b, vol. 3, pp. 352–53.

On the vast flatlands, the pennants
move arrayed in ranks.
The armored soldiers shine,
brightened by the brilliant sun.
The carved bows shine brightly,
shooting the comets.
The war horses that quell the northern horsemen,
the winds flutter their manes.
The *di*-conquering commanders,
their air is forbidding.
Reputations are bound,
to be made this way.
Fame does not fade in historical chronicles,
but resounds broadly.[93]

Zhu Yuanzhang describes the Mongols of the Great Yuan in diverse ways – as administrative issues, military challenges, generic northern horsemen, and, as the next chapter make clears, individual men confronting specific challenges and choices. This is because the Mongols held a multivalent significance for Zhu Yuanzhang and others of the time. As a poor rural boy, Zhu Yuanzhang grew up under Great Yuan rule. As an ambitious rebel leader, he campaigned against Great Yuan armies. As founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, he sought to exploit the Great Yuan legacy to his own ends. At the same time that Zhu Yuanzhang's perceptions of the Great Yuan derived from direct, firsthand experience during his career, they also owed much to rich historical and literary traditions of representation of northern peoples, traditions often filtered through the scholars closest to him. Such scholars and the men who shared their perspectives were among Zhu Yuanzhang's most important audiences. Such classical notions as Heaven's Mandate, Heaven's will, the succession of legitimate dynasties, and the enduring differences between China and its northern neighbors were intended to appeal to their concerns and values.

The Inner Circle

This chapter has frequently repeated "Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors" as a gesture toward the role that literate men around the throne played in drafting imperial proclamations and formulating policy. Zhu Yuanzhang did not speak or write anything like the highly polished edicts preserved in the *Ming Veritable Records*, which were intended to showcase the poise and learning expected of a proper ruler.[94] Scattered examples of his unedited writing in

[93] *DMTZ*, 17.28a, vol. 3, pp. 395. [94] Chen Gaohua, "Shuo Zhu Yuanzhang."

An Imperial Record of the Emperor the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty 明太祖皇帝欽錄 or the *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*, a fifteenth-century Korean royal chronicle and the *Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, another Korean source, offer a surer guide to the emperor's blunt, sometimes thuggish, tone.[95] Further, in an effort to legitimate Zhu Di's usurpation of the throne, government officials rewrote much of the single most important source on Zhu Yuanzhang's reign, the *Ming Veritable Records of the Grand Progenitor*. Such officials revised (and sometimes simply fabricated) the emperor's informal comments, proclamations, and directives to show that he favored Zhu Di above all other sons.[96] In a word, caution must be used in attributing the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative exclusively and directly to Zhu Yuanzhang.

Despite such caveats, the edicts and other documents issued in Zhu Yuanzhang's name more closely reflect his ideas than was true for any other Ming emperor. Fiercely protective of the ruler's prerogatives, Zhu Yuanzhang guarded against usurpation of his authority and excessive delegation of affairs of state to his officials. As teacher to the realm, Zhu Yuanzhang insisted that documents issued in his name correctly reflect his judgments and values. Officials composed polished edicts based on Zhu Yuanzhang's oral comments.[97] They also drafted announcements to be promulgated throughout the realm.[98] However, Zhu Yuanzhang wanted the last word on nearly everything.[99] Out of fear of Zhu Yuanzhang's violent temper, genuine desire to serve the dynasty, and hope to advance their careers, senior ministers often tried to anticipate the emperor's preferences even when they were not writing in his name.[100]

[95] Chan, "Guanyu *Ming Taizu*"; "Ming Taizu zhi Gaoli"; Zhang Dexin, "*Taizu huangdi qinlu* jiqi faxian." For other Ming-period sources that preserve Zhu Yuanzhang's so-called vernacular edicts, see Chen Gaohua, "Guanyu Zhu Yuanzhang wen." For the revisionist argument that many such "vernacular language edicts" represent a specialized form of translating Mongolian into written Chinese rather than contemporary vernacular Chinese, see Miya, *Mongoru jidai*, 177–268.

[96] Wang Chongwu, *Ming Jingnan*; Wu Han, "Ji *Ming shilu*"; Shang Chuan, "Guanyu *Ming Taizu shilu*"; Huang Zhangjian, "Du Mingkan *Yuqing yiji*"; Franke, "Historical Writing," pp. 748–49; Mano, *Mindai bunka*, pp. 1–18; Xie, *Ming shilu yanjiu*, pp. 122–29; "Shishu *Ming Taizu*."

[97] Chen Gaohua, "Shuo Zhu Yuanzhang," p. 507; Wan Ming, "Ming Taizu waijiao," pp. 28–29; "Mingdai waijiao zhaoling," pp. 65–66.

[98] Wan Ming, "Ming Taizu waijiao," pp. 29–30.

[99] Zhu Yuanzhang was not omnipotent. Abundant evidence makes clear that he could not control even his own sons, much less the imperial government, certainly not his subjects, and most clearly not neighboring polities. However, more than any other Ming ruler, Zhu Yuanzhang insisted on control of the imperial voice and image. For Zhu Yuanzhang's role in the production of his imperial portrait, see Ching, "Tibetan Buddhism," pp. 330–31.

[100] Masking his personal dislike, senior minister Song Lian composed a funerary inscription for the former rebel leader Fang Guozhen that reflected Zhu Yuanzhang's preferences. See Zuo Dongling, "Fang Guozhen shendao beiming."

Zhu Yuanzhang insisted that he alone had the right to interpret the story of the Great Yuan ruling house. When reports of a major victory over the Yuan court at Yingchang reached the capital in 1370, officials offered felicitations to the Ming emperor. Zhu Yuanzhang first observed that Toghan-Temür had held the throne for thirty years and that his licentious excesses had brought about his death. He then pivoted to rebuke the official who had drafted the congratulatory memorial. "You were originally a minister of the Yuan dynasty. You should not be celebrating today's victory." Zhu Yuanzhang instructed the Ministry of Rites to circulate placards that forbid anyone who had previously served in the Yuan government from offering felicitations on victories in the north against the Mongols.[101]

Zhu Yuanzhang was prickly about how his ministers described the Great Yuan ruling house. He took sharp exception to grandiose wording contained in an imperial announcement about the 1370 victory at Yingchang drafted by the Central Secretariat. He upbraided officials not only for their florid writing style but also for their defamation of the Yuan ruler. "Although the Yuan may have been barbarians," Zhu remarked, "they ruled the Central State for nearly a century." They had cared for the parents of Zhu and his officials, and thus deserved respect and gratitude.[102] One suspects Zhu Yuanzhang was making a more fundamental point: officials have no right to pass judgment on rulers.

Conclusion

Through material incentives, honors, negotiation, and persuasion, the Ming court sought to convince a variety of audiences of a particular understanding of the Great Yuan, past and present. This vision included the following key elements. Although once supported by Heaven and for a time both militarily powerful and governmentally responsible, Great Yuan rule under Toghan-Temür had come to an irreversible end. Poor morality, administrative incompetence, and lack of concern for the people had resulted in Heaven abandoning the Great Yuan. In its stead, Heaven had selected Zhu Yuanzhang as the vehicle through which order was to be restored and Chinese cultural and morals revived. Zhu Yuanzhang had never betrayed the Great Yuan. Rather, he had sought to reunify a realm previously rent asunder by competing Chinese and Mongolian warlords. Whatever their claims, contemporary remnants of the Great Yuan court and biological descendants of the Chinggisid ruling house had marginalized themselves. In spatial terms, they had abandoned the Central Plains for the steppe. In political terms, they refused to follow the example of all surrounding polities and peoples in recognizing the

[101] *MTZSL*, 53.4b, p. 1041; *GQ*, 4.1.418; Xu Xueju, *Guo chao dian hui*, *juan* 1, p. 95b.
[102] *MTZSL*, 53.4b–5a, pp. 1040–41; *GQ*, 4.1.419.

Ming dynastic house as the exclusive holder of the Mandate of Heaven and sole legitimate ruler of China. Because the early Ming court was interested in persuasion, it appealed to familiar ideas recognizable through both historical and contemporary precedents. Innovation per se was simply not a goal.

The Chinggisid narrative was never the only way that Zhu Yuanzhang wrote about the Great Yuan and its personnel. He also saw them as administrative and military questions that demanded pragmatic, concrete responses. Nonetheless, the Chinggisid narrative was a central feature of how the Ming court represented itself at home and abroad. As such, it remained at its core a highly charged political enterprise over which Zhu Yuanzhang insisted on absolute control. At the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors mounted arguments they thought would resonate with their audiences. Recurring throughout the topois sketched in this chapter was the theme of spreading chaos, which resulted from the collapse of Great Yuan governance and which was resolved through Zhu Yuanzhang's rule. For the millions of people who suffered through the traumatic disruptions of civil war during the 1350 and 1360s, this was a powerful reason to support the Ming regime.[103] At the very least, it justified abandoning past loyalties to the Great Yuan.

In addition to the rhetorical and political dimensions of the Chinggisid narrative highlighted earlier, military coercion remained an essential element of the Ming court's engagement with the Great Yuan. Zhu Yuanzhang used military force to weaken and destroy his enemies, impress allies, and sway the wavering. The early Ming court fully understood that the reasons for and results of military action needed to be interpreted for audiences at home and abroad. The following chapter examines the Ming court's depiction of several important military campaigns against the Yuan ruling house and how they figured in Ming court politics.

[103] For educated men's descriptions of the civil war's chaotic violence, see Dardess, "Civil War to Ming Founding," pp. 6–16; Langlois, "Song Lian and Liu Ji," pp. 139–60; Mote, *Poet Kao Ch'i*, pp. 52–144.

6 A Precarious Tale
War, Military Men, and Court Politics

One eminent specialist in Mongolian studies describes the Ming court's initial response to the Great Yuan's sustained defiance as "remarkably restrained." "Diplomatic missions, courtesy toward high-born prisoners, even a special messenger to attend the mourning ceremonies for Ayushiridara and a personal eulogy by the emperor," she notes, "must certainly be seen as proof of the Ming's intention to win the goodwill of the Mongols."[1] Zhu Yuanzhang worked hard to influence the attitudes of Chinggisids and their allies. However, Ming restraint tells only part of the story.

Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly mobilized military resources against the Yuan court on the steppe. In 1369, 1370, 1372, 1374, 1380, 1387, 1388, 1390, and 1392, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered both small-scale raids against the southern steppe and major military campaigns (involving Ming armies that numbered between 100,000 and 200,000 troops) against Mongol forces.[2] In addition, Zhu raised large armies to campaign against Yuan affiliates in Yunnan and Liaodong. The 1381–82 Yunnan campaign involved a reported 300,000 Ming soldiers, while the 1387 campaign mobilized approximately 200,000 imperial troops. His generals engaged and usually defeated Yuan troops beyond the Ming dynasty's expanding borders. Due in large part to logistical difficulties inherent to projecting military force deep into the steppe, however, they failed to eradicate the Great Yuan regime. The founder's successors continued to field armies against the Mongols into the next century and beyond. This ensured that senior military commanders figured prominently in the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. In addition, Ming military triumphs set the stage for court drama, as captive Great Yuan nobles arrived at the Ming court for audiences with the emperor.

[1] Veit, "Eastern Steppe," p. 160.
[2] Chen Wuqiang ("Ming Hongwuchao," p. 115) notes that more than 75% of Ming dynastic campaigns against the Mongols during the Hongwu period were waged against the Yuan court and its supporters and that the Ming dynasty initiated most conflicts.

In a word, military conflict with the Great Yuan is essential for understanding the early Ming court, including its Chinggisid narrative.[3] Military defeat and political betrayal, which could be seen as failures of rulership, revealed the early Ming court's limitations. They undermined the dynasty's carefully crafted, incessantly repeated, and widely disseminated Chinggisid narrative. Ming victory was not assured. Great Yuan revival was not unthinkable. Zhu Yuanzhang did not always retain his men's allegiance. Some Mongols who offered their loyalty to the Ming throne suffered abuse.

This chapter includes six sections. First, it considers the Ming court's justifications for war and the historical and contemporary significance Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers assigned to military conflict with the Great Yuan. Second, it reviews Ming campaigns against the Great Yuan. Third, it examines the Ming court's depiction of military victories over the Great Yuan. Fourth, it explores how military commanders became imbricated in the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. Fifth, it analyzes the Ming court's attempts to depict Great Yuan nobles' submission as evidence of Zhu Yuanzhang as east Eurasia premier patron and ultimate sovereign. Finally, the chapter concludes with a few words about how domestic political turmoil undermined Zhu Yuanzhang's image as a generous, competent ruler.

Justification of War with the Great Yuan

On the eve of the 1372 campaign against the Yuan court, the literatus Lin You penned a dedication (*xu*) to a prominent military commander, Li Wenzhong.[4] Trusted supporter, experienced commander, and emperor's nephew, Li Wenzhong was to strike northeastward against the Great Yuan court in today's eastern Mongolia. Two other senior military men, Xu Da (1332–85) and Feng Sheng (1330–95), were to lead troops into today's central Mongolia and western Inner Mongolia/Gansu province, respectively.[5] In 1370, Xu Da and Li Wenzhong had triumphed over Great Yuan forces, capturing hundreds of Chinggisid nobles and tens of thousands of Mongolian troops. Upon their return to Nanjing, Zhu Yuanzhang met them outside the city walls in a public gesture of imperial favor. Soon after, Xu Da and Li Wenzhong were ranked second and third highest among thirty-four men to receive aristocratic titles for their exemplary military service.[6] Thus, the 1372 campaign was a high-profile

[3] Dreyer, *Early Ming China*, pp. 71–76, 140–43; Wada, "Minsho no Manshū"; Zhao Xianhai, *Mingdai jiubian*, pp. 46–125; Wu Guoqing, *Zhongguo zhanzhengshi*, vol. 6, pp. 553–94.

[4] The dedication is undated. My working hypothesis is that the dedication was composed for the 1372 campaign.

[5] Wu Guoqing, *Zhongguo zhanzhengshi*, vol. 6, pp. 564–72.

[6] Taylor, "Ming T'ai-tsu and the Nobility," esp. p. 60. See also Taylor's entry on Li Wenzhong in *DMB*, pp. 884–85.

military operation led by the Ming dynasty's most prestigious military commanders. That the campaign would end in failure (discussed in Chapter 3) adds to the dedication's poignancy, but our central concern here is one Ming court official's depiction of war with the Great Yuan in the early 1370s. Lin You may have been writing for an individual man, but he was simultaneously weighing in a major policy decision by Zhu Yuanzhang.

Lin first locates the campaign in a wide historical context. His reference point is the Song dynasty's second emperor, Song Taizong (r. 976–97).[7]

> Song Taizong possessed virtue to order the realm, however, he lacked concern about ordering the realm. At that time, the end of the Five Dynasties period was not distant. Among ministers of strategy and rigorous generals, those accomplished in combat with swords and halberds, nine out of ten were still at court. [Song Taizong] viewed the sudden rise of the Kitans as something that would be destroyed with a single attack. He was in a word complacent in the peace of the moment.[8]

For Lin You, the Song emperor's failure to deal a decisive blow to the Kitans created "an endless disaster for his sons and grandsons," a catastrophe that led directly to the Treaty of Chanyuan of 1005, which bought the Song court peace at a cost: annual payments of silks and precious metals, opening of state-subsidized border markets, and diplomatic recognition of the Kitan ruling house as the full equal of the Song dynasty.[9] Lin contrasts these dire events with the sagacious behavior of the Ming founder who, despite recent victories over enemies at home and abroad, recognized the continued threat of the Mongols. Lin suggests that the Mongols, although defeated, constitute an even more dangerous threat than the Kitan.

> The Kitans of the past were besotted with the north. To draw a metaphor, they were like a fierce beast that took the north as its lair. It would emerge to lay in wait for humans. It was temporary. In the case of the northern horsemen caitiffs today, it has been in excess of a century since they won the Central State. Thus they view the Central State as their lair. When their power was exhausted, they fled. It is just like an animal that has lost its way home. It will gnash its teeth and the hairs of its mane will stand on end. It will observe the direction of the wind and howl mournfully. Is it possible it will be any time

[7] This is Zhao Jiong.

[8] Lin You, *Tiantai* (*SKCM*, *ji* 27, pp. 559–60); Seikadō Bunko edition, 18b.

[9] Lin You's assertions about the Song emperor's lack of interest in ordering the country, that is, regaining lost territory, do not fit well with recent historians' views. Lin You likely refers to the Battle of Gaoliang River in the spring of 979, when Song Taizong led troops into the field against the Kitan, laying siege to the Liao dynasty's southern capital (present-day Beijing). He suffered a major defeat, fleeing the field in a donkey cart before restoring some measure of order on his army's withdrawal southward back to Kaifeng. This campaign, however, did not mark the end of Taizong's efforts to seize Liao territory. Again in 986, Song armies marched against the Liao, although, with memories of his inglorious flight of 979 still fresh in his mind, Taizong remained in his capital. See Mote, *Imperial China*, pp. 104–9; Lau and Huang, "Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty," pp. 248–51; Lorge, *Reunification of China*, pp. 185–222.

at all before a pretext is found to provoke an incident? The army that attacks them should not delay.[10]

Running through Lin You's dedication is a concern to justify the Ming dynasty's attack on the Great Yuan. Lin tacitly acknowledges that the Ming emperor was launching a preemptive, if in his mind fully justified, campaign. Lin You makes the case for war, which suggests that a portion of educated men needed to be persuaded. "I humbly submit," Lin You proposes, "that there are three reasons why it is appropriate to campaign [against the Mongols]."

> There are not two suns in the sky; there are not two rulers most exalted. They are merely Yi and Di, [but] they dare to arrogate the title of emperor. Befuddled, they face southward and undertake the affairs of Heaven's Son. This is the first reason why it is right to chastise them. They no longer hold the Central State, but they issue empty titles to their officials and establish government posts of the Central State for them to occupy. This is the second reason why it is right to chastise them. They fail to grasp that Heaven's Mandate is with His Majesty and without reason remain covetous, causing the people of our border regions to set up warning beacons without cease. This is the third reason why it is right to chastise them.[11]

The first two reasons for war concern the Yuan court's continuing political viability, or from Lin's perspective, political pretensions. The third is a straightforward military threat to the Ming borders. Perhaps the most fundamental rationale for military action was the Great Yuan ruler's claim to be Heaven's Son. Lin's articulation of the Mongol threat is congruent with Zhu Yuanzhang's perceptions described in Chapter 5.

Lin's explicit historical comparison is revealing. Because of its century-long rule over the Central State, the Great Yuan now menaces the Ming dynasty in a more than the Kitan had ever threatened the Song dynasty. Because of its continuing political legitimacy and its deep ties to the territories and peoples now controlled by the Ming court, the Yuan court is too dangerous to ignore. The Yuan court has officials, just as the Ming court does. The Chinggisids and the Ming use the same administrative nomenclature. The Great Yuan appoints its officers to territories now controlled by the Ming. Zhu Yuanzhang, Lin You, and many others in east Eurasia viewed the Great Yuan as a court, not simply steppe warriors ravaging the Ming border. The Great Yuan and the Great Ming were rival dynasts.

Lin concludes by offering five reasons why the Ming forces were certain to triumph. Lin's analysis shows a strong understanding of conditions in Mongolia, most especially steppe politics' fissiparous nature. One cannot help but wonder if the extended analysis of why the Ming forces "were certain to

[10] Lin You, *Tiantai* (*SKCM*, *ji* 27, p. 560); Seikadō Bunko edition, 19a.
[11] Lin You, *Tiantai* (*SKCM*, *ji* 27, p. 560); Seikadō Bunko edition, 19a.

triumph" wasn't meant to reassure an anxious General Li on the eve of battle in particular and those observers skeptical of another steppe campaign in general.[12]

War with the Great Yuan

Despite initial victories, the campaign against the Great Yuan sputtered for much of the 1370s. As Chapter 3 describes, in 1372 Yuan armies inflicted major losses on the Ming dynasty, most notably at Qara-Qorum and at the important grain depot at Niujiazhuang far to the east in Liaodong. Military success and a fortuitous crisis in Kaegyŏng, which brought to the throne a new and much more sympathetic king, raised the Great Yuan's standing as a court in East Asia. The Koryŏ court once again officially recognized the Great Yuan's status as a fully legitimate dynasty.

In the late 1370s, the Ming court attempted to regain momentum in its rivalry with the Great Yuan. In 1378, the current Great Khan, Ayushiridara (Toghan-Temür's son and successor) died. Hoping to exploit political uncertainty before the next Great Khan could consolidate control, the Ming court renewed its diplomatic and military pressure on the Great Yuan and its allies. During the last half of 1378, Zhu Yuanzhang sent at least six missions to the Great Yuan court and key allies to persuade them that the Chinggisid cause was doomed. During the last half of the 1370s, the Ming court also reorganized and expanded military infrastructure along its northern border. This intensified military preparation was perhaps clearest along the eastern end of the Hexi Corridor. To prevent the Great Yuan from concentrating its military resources to its western front, Zhu Yuanzhang simultaneously attacked the southeastern Mongolian steppe.[13]

Following its victory in Yunnan far to the southwest in 1381–82, the Ming court increased pressure on the Great Yuan court and its supporters in Liaodong and the southeastern Mongolian steppe. The first major development occurred in 1387. After years of intensifying military and diplomatic pressure, the most powerful surviving Yuan general, Naghachu, finally surrendered to Zhu Yuanzhang. The Ming court granted Naghachu an aristocratic title, a senior position in the imperial army, an annual emolument, and generous

[12] The Hanlin scholar Sun Fen strikes a similarly confident note in his poem of parting for an official about to set out with an imperial army based in Datong, a strategic garrison town, in the ongoing hostilities with the Mongols. He dutifully notes that the Ming armies "rely at a distance on Imperial Awe to clear the boreal steppe" and speaks of the army "returning home in triumph." See Sun Fen, *Xi an ji*, 8.7b (*BTGZ*, vol. 100, p. 58).

[13] Li Ling, "Yuanmo Mingchu Bei Yuan," p. 112. At the same time that senior commanders such as Li Wenzhong and Mu Ying pressed the attack on the western front, Ma Yun struck Daning and elsewhere near today's Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.

rewards in silver and textiles. It also immediately removed him from his Liaodong base and dispatched him to campaign in distant Yunnan. A large part of Naghachu's troops were integrated into the Ming armies.[14]

Naghachu's departure opened the way to strike directly against the Great Yuan court. Zhu Yuanzhang appointed senior commander Lan Yu to oversee the campaign. Lan Yu was the son-in-law of the early Ming period's most senior military commander, Chang Yuchun. In 1371, Chang Yuchun's daughter became a consort of the heir apparent. Chang Yuchun was thus the heir apparent's father-in-law and Lan Yu his uncle. Later, one of Lan Yu's daughters became a consort of Zhu Yuanzhang's thirteenth son, the Prince of Shu (Zhu Chun). Lan had repeatedly served with Xu Da and Li Wenzhong in major campaigns both along the northern border and in the southwest. In 1387, he became commander of Jizhou, a key garrison region along the northern border.[15]

On April 13, 1388, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered half a dozen senior commanders to join Lan Yu in the campaign against the Great Yuan.[16] Just three days earlier, a Great Yuan official and his son had come in submission. Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that they be settled in Quanning, a region along the Ming dynasty's northern border fit for nomadic pastoralist life.[17] Based on their description (it is not clear whether he told Ming authorities in Beiping or whether he actually traveled to Nanjing), Zhu Yuanzhang concluded that the Great Yuan court was in disarray. The Mongols are frightened, undisciplined, and unlikely to survive long, the emperor informed Lan Yu. He then ordered Lan Yu to rush to the "caitiff court and overturn their lair." Lan Yu was to accept with good grace any Mongol who wished to surrender. "Do not make any mistakes that would disappoint Our expectations," warned the emperor.[18] Days later, Lan Yu's army of 150,000 men left Daning. Based on the most recent intelligence, Lan Yu headed almost due north to Lake Buir, which straddles the border of today's Mongolia and China. Toghus-Temür was encamped there.[19]

On May 17, 1388, Lan Yu surprised the Great Khan's court, which had moved northeast of Lake Buir. Toghus-Temür and his advisors knew the Ming army was approaching. However, believing it was beyond the reach of Lan Yu's troops, the Yuan court posted no sentries. They calculated that the region lacked enough water sources and grass to supply the large, energy-intensive Ming army. They were almost right. Ming forces were on the brink of turning

[14] Chan, "Naghachu," in *DMB*, pp. 1084–85.
[15] Liu Zhijie, "Lan Yu junlü"; Fan Shuzhi, *Mingshi jianggao*, pp. 81–92; Tan Jiasheng, "Zhu Di yu Lan Yu."
[16] *MTZSL*, 189.3a, p. 2835; *GQ*, 9.1.682. [17] *MTZSL*, 189.1b, p. 2832.
[18] *MTZSL*, 189.3a, p. 2835. [19] *MTZSL*, 189.16a, p. 2861.

back when the discovery of spring water (more on this later) and a senior commander's inspiring words about duty to dynasty convinced them to press on. A sandstorm allowed the Ming vanguard to approach the Great Yuan camp nearly undetected. One Mongol commander hastily organized a fierce resistance against the Ming onslaught. This allowed Toghus-Temür and several dozen of his closest supporters, who had been preparing a northward move even before the Ming attack, to flee on horseback. Lan Yu and a group of elite riders pursued the Great Khan for several hundred miles before conceding failure and returning to Lake Buir. Although Toghus-Temür escaped, the majority of his court was captured.[20] Ming military pressure continued in the weeks following Lake Buir. Lan Yu's forces defeated another Yuan commander, Qara-Jang, again seizing large numbers of captives and livestock.[21] There would be other campaigns, but historians today remember Lan Yu's 1388 as the Ming dynasty's last significant battle with the Yuan court.

Depictions of War with the Mongols

From early in the dynasty, celebration of military victory over the Mongols formed an element of court life, reflecting the Great Yuan's omnipresence for Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors. As part of the codification of court protocol, in 1370 Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the composition of twelve songs commemorating victories related to the dynasty's founding. The songs were to be played at state banquets. The fifth of these songs explicitly addresses the Great Yuan.

> Heaven's Fortune compels change,
> the caitiff's fortune shifts.
> The royal army campaigns northward,
> to secure the Yanjing Capital Region.
> One hundred years of rites and music,
> [this is] the day of revival.[22]

Encapsulated in this brief court melody are several familiar themes – fortune's operation, Daidu's capture, and China's revival – explicitly linked to military action that led to the dynasty's founding. Several other such melodies similarly rehearsed key victories in Zhu Yuanzhang's rise.

Ming triumph over Vajravarmi, a direct descendant of Qubilai who ruled Yunnan and refused to acknowledge Zhu Yuanzhang's legitimacy, was soon integrated into musical celebration of dynastic greatness. In his preface to a series of twelve military tunes dedicated to the rise of the Great Ming, the

[20] *MTZSL*, 190.2a, p. 2865; *GQ*, 9.1.684. [21] *MTZSL*, 190.4b, p. 2870; *GQ*, 9.1.687.
[22] *MTZSL*, 56.11a, p. 1108. For full translation, see Robinson, "Celebrating War," p. 109.

official Wang Shen (1360–1400) observes that the Ming founder vanquished the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty "in order to cleanse the humiliation of recent generations." The emperor's accomplishments, Wang insisted, matched those of the storied sovereigns of high antiquity, Tang and Wu.[23] Nine military tunes had been created in 1370 for the court; Wang Shen's work in the 1380s represents a new work extending the musical narrative of dynastic military success. He entitled it "Pruning the Buds," suggesting that he viewed Vajravarmi's regime as a stubborn bud clinging to life even after the mighty tree of the Great Yuan had fallen.[24]

Let us turn now to Zhu Yuanzhang's last major victory over the Great Yuan court, the battle of Lake Buir described earlier. The following paragraphs explore two related questions. First, how did Ming imperial accounts depict the 1388 campaign? Which themes, episodes, and rhetoric did Zhu Yuanzhang, his generals, and his ministers chose to highlight and which did they omit? Second, what do such depictions reveal about the Ming court's perceptions of the Great Yuan two decades after the dynasty's establishment?

The *Ming Veritable Records* and later derivative accounts highlight the staggering number of captives seized at Lake Buir. Ming forces captured 129 members of Toghus-Temür's immediate family and affines, including his second-born son, Dibaonu, the empress consort, the consort of the former heir apparent, and various princesses. Court elites, 2,994 people in total, including several princes, also fell into Lan Yu's hands. Ming dynastic records indicate that all told, 77,037 men and women were seized.[25] In addition, Lan Yu's forces captured 15,803 households in the weeks following Lake Buir.[26]

Ming field commanders regularly reported on the number of people they killed and captured. Such statistics influenced rewards and promotions for both them and their men; this information also figured in strategic planning at the capital. In reports on Lake Buir preserved in the *Ming Veritable Records*, however, an unusual number of captives are designated by their names and titles.[27] We read of Grand Defender Manzi, Councilor-in-Chief Shiremün, Director Nekelei, Assistant Supervisor of the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent, Dorji, the Prince of Wu, and Darma, the Prince of Dai, and others.

[23] Wang Shen, in He Qiaoyuan, *Huang Ming wen zheng*, 6.1a (*SKCM*, *ji* 328, p. 157).
[24] See Robinson, "Celebrating War," pp. 115–16.
[25] *MTZSL*, 190.2b, p. 2886; *GQ*, 9.1.684.
[26] *MTZSL*, 190.4b, p. 2870; *GQ*, 9.1.687.
[27] It is almost certain that battle reports included detailed information on important prisoners. However, unlike the Qing period for which such archival documents survive, for the Hongwu period we largely depend on the abstracts found in the *Ming Veritable Records*.

In terms of personnel, the Great Yuan's loss was the Great Ming's gain. The Ming court kept some of these captives in custody for decades.[28] As previous sections have shown, the Ming court actively used recently submitted Mongols to negotiate with, even recruit, unallied Mongols. At the same time, promulgating the scale of captives seized at Lake Buir highlighted the Great Khan's inability to protect even his closest kin and supporters. The Ming court had every interest in advertising what it consistently depicted as the utter bankruptcy of the Great Khan's claims as a good ruler and generous patron.

The Ming court was strikingly interested in the precise number of animals and livestock seized. Ming imperial records tells us that "47,000 horses, 4,804 camels, 102,452 head of cattle and sheep, and more than 3,000 carts" were seized at Lake Buir.[29] These numbers do not reflect the livestock that Lan Yu's forces seized in the weeks following Lake Buir, which included an additional 48,150 head of horses and camels.[30] The Great Yuan court's large number of animals and livestock is not surprising given that this was an increasingly steppe-oriented regime. The Ming court understood that livestock was essential to the Great Khan's political and military power. As an invaluable asset and indicator of the Great Yuan's standing, livestock was a highly visible form of war booty. Besides, it was immediately useful to the Ming army.

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors, like most of their Eurasian counterparts, were preoccupied with securing adequate supplies of good quality horses. One of the few surviving examples of Zhu Yuanzhang's calligraphy is a short inscription he penned on a Northern Song painting of steppe horses under the care of Kitan herders. Horses were essential, the Ming emperor wrote, to his success in founding the dynasty. Raising large numbers of horses would remain essential for his successors. Through trade, diplomatic gift exchanges, and war, the Ming court worked assiduously to acquire horses from groups in today's Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan, Tibet, Mongolia, Jurchen lands, the Korean peninsula (and islands), Okinawa, and today's Central Asia. The tens of thousands of steppe horses seized at Lake Buir and elsewhere were incorporated into the Ming military.

The Ming court took great satisfaction in the acquisition of Great Yuan symbols of political authority and legitimacy.[31] As an experienced commander

[28] Among those captured at Lake Buir were the brother and sister of Arugtai, the man who would become the most dominant Mongol leader of the early fifteenth century. Only in 1411 did Zhu Di return them. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, 122.2a, p. 1537; *GQ*, 15.1.1070. The Ming court held other Mongolian nobles. In June 1412, the Oirat leader Maḥmūd requested the return of the Great Khan's son, Toqto'a-Buqa, who was in Ming custody. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, 128.1a, p. 1591; *GQ*, 15.1.1076.

[29] *MTZSL*, 190.2b, p. 2886; *GQ*, 9.1.684. [30] *MTZSL*, 190.4b, p. 2870; *GQ*, 9.1.687.

[31] The emperor of the Xia dynasty, Ming Sheng, was captured in 1371 and transported to Nanjing. Ming generals were careful to deliver his "seals of state, gold seal, crown, bodyguard, 58 silver seals, and 640 bronze seals." See *MSSL*, 24b (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 636).

attuned to his ruler's preferences, Lan Yu knew what to include in his victory memorials to Zhu Yuanzhang. He detailed the seizure of 149 items of "the [Yuan] emperor's seals, maps and populations registers, and placards" and 3,390 imperial appointment and inter-departmental memoranda.[32] One gold and three silver seals rounded out the emblems of state secured during the attack.[33] During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Chinggisid rulers had used seals written in Mongolian, Chinese, Persian, and Pakpa as an important element of governance in their vast empire.[34] After his armies seized the Song capital in 1276, acquisition of Song dynastic seals, both of the ruling family and office-holders, was a high priority for Qubilai.[35] As rulers of the Great Yuan, Mongol emperors had used imperial seals to run their vast empire. Seals issued by the Great Yuan were widely circulated, easily recognized, and broadly accepted emblems of political authority.

Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang wished to remove such potent political currency from circulation. In their descriptions of Li Wenzhong's defeat of the Great Yuan court, Ming court historians listed his seizure of "fifteen Song and Yuan seals of jade and gold; one jade seal from the Xuanhe Hall (the Northern Song's dynastic repository for book and painting collections); two sets of jade investiture tablets; and a princely court presentation jade, a great court presentation jade, a jade belt, and a jade axe."[36] An early account of the Ming dynasty depicts the acquisition of these seals and other emblems of Great Yuan political authority as a landmark event in the Ming's establishment.[37] Now, in a congratulatory edict to his general Lan Yu following the 1388 victory at Lake Buir, Zhu Yuanzhang deftly linked the Great Khan's lost seal and failed rulership: "The northern horsemen's king abandoned the precious seal of state and fled into hiding."[38]

One veteran military campaigner of the early Ming period was similarly attuned to seals' importance. His memoir notes that Lan Yu had "campaigned into the steppe in pursuit of the jade seal" and that Toghus-Temür "grasped the seal and fled northward."[39] In fact, he recounted an interaction between Lan Yu and an empress of the Great Yuan who had been captured at Lake Buir. The empress told Lan Yu that the seal was not for ordinary men's eyes; to look upon the seal was to gain the realm. Taking the empress at her word, Lan Yu

[32] I thank Chen Hsi-yüan of Academia Sinica for improving my understanding of these documents' format and function.
[33] *MTZSL*, 190.2b, p. 2866; *GQ*, 9.1.684; *YSTBJ*, 68.3.1283.
[34] Aubin, "To Impress the Seal," pp. 172–89. [35] *YS*, 1.9.177, 179.
[36] *MTZSL*, 52.6a, p. 1021. In 1374, Ming envoys returned from the Tibetan borderlands to Nanjing with a haul of "maps and population registers [inscribed] in gold and jade, gold and jade seals presented by the Yuan emperor to the Dynastic Preceptor as well as silver and copper seals and imperial rescripts from the Pacification Commission." See *JSLJZ*, p. 382.
[37] Xia Yuanji, *Yi tong zhao ji lu*, 12a. See also *GCXZ*, 5.90a, vol. 1, p. 181; *YSTBJ*, 68.3.1279.
[38] *DMTZ*, 5.4a, vol. 2, p. 10; *JSLJZ*, p. 445. [39] *JSLJZ*, p. 448.

"didn't dare verify whether the seal was actually present."[40] No corroborating evidence survives, but the episode suggests seals' significance to informed contemporaries.

Keen interest in seals issued by the Great Yuan court shaped diplomatic practice. Seals were bargaining tokens.[41] When the Chinggisid noble Budnara and other leaders first offered their surrender to a Ming field commander in 1370, the presentation of "gold, silver, and copper seals, gold and silver tallies, imperial orders, and gold, jade, maps, and records" figured prominently in the ceremony. In the words of one observer at the time, "These are the symbols of authority held by the prince."[42] Late in 1373, a Pacification Commissioner from the Sichuan borderlands sent his son to Nanjing with seals and imperial rescripts bestowed by the Yuan. The son and other members of the mission all received gifts from the Ming throne.[43] When men from Köke-Temür's army wanted to convince Ming commanders of their sincere desire to surrender, they handed over seals stolen from Köke-Temür.[44] As noted in Chapter 3, Nair-Buqa and his men presented to Zhu Yuanzhang four silver seals of office, three gold tallies, eight silver tallies, five iron tallies, and twenty-eight orders issued by the Yuan court.[45] The early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative highlighted the seizure of Great Yuan seals because they emblemized political authority and allegiance.

Throughout Eurasia, the Mongols had demanded the submission of maps and population registers from subjugated lands and peoples. Governmental notices, imperial rescripts, and the rest were not only administrative tools; they also demonstrated the Great Yuan court's standing on the wider Eurasian stage. Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers frequently disparaged the Mongols as barbarian caitiffs and their influence as mutton stench. Nonetheless, the Ming court conceived of Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and Toghus-Temür as powerful rulers who used the same symbols of authority – imperial seals, official administrative ranks, large entourages, and official written records of territories and subjects – as it did.

The next section discusses the broad rhetorical themes that Zhu Yuanzhang, Lan Yu, and other members of the Ming court highlighted in their depiction of the Lake Buir victory. First, however, let us turn to a more prosaic but equally

[40] *JSLJZ*, p. 448.

[41] Such symbols were not enough for some. Yu Ben (*JSLJZ*, p. 299) relates that late in 1369, envoys representing local leaders near Gongchang (in today's southeastern Gansu Province) turned over letters patent, seals, and other official papers issued by the Yuan dynasty to a Ming military commander. Unhappy that locals had not offered gold, jewels, or horses, the military commander flayed the envoys and exposed their corpses as a warning to others.

[42] *JSLJZ*, p. 322. Yu Ben (p. 360) refers regularly to the presentation of Yuan seals and letters patent during these years.

[43] *MTZSL*, 86.3b, p. 1528. [44] *MTZSL*, 86.7b, p. 1536. [45] *MTZSL*, 201.3b, p. 3012.

essential feature of the Ming court's efforts to defeat its chief rival: the distribution of wealth among former Great Yuan supporters. Wealth took the form of one-time gifts of gold, silver, paper cash, and textiles. It also appeared as promises of annual emoluments, housing (most especially in the capital at Nanjing), and living subsidies of fuel and grain. Aristocratic titles and prestigious positions with the Ming imperial military served as political and cultural wealth.

The *Ming Veritable Records* note the steady stream of Mongol leaders who announced their desire to join the Ming in the weeks following Lan Yu's victory at Lake Buir. The Ming court opened the subsidy spigot to both these new groups and those that had previously pledged allegiance.[46] The former Yuan commander Öljei-Temür and half a dozen other men who had surrendered to the Ming presented horses to the court, which in turn offered them cash. Throughout July, the court repeatedly offered gifts to Mongol princes (including again Aruqtu) and lesser leaders.[47] Late in September 1388, more than 1,000 men, supporters of the recently deceased Naghachu, most of whom held positions in the Yuan government, surrendered at Liaodong.[48] A day later, the Ming court announced awards of cash and textiles for nearly 3,000 former Yuan nobles, officers, and soldiers.[49] Early in October 1388, the throne gave Qara-Jang's son, Üchü-Qurtuqa, who had recently submitted, a gift of 1,250 taels of silver as well as cash and textiles.[50] To put the gift's scale in perspective, Lan Yu had received 2,000 taels of silver for capturing Qara-Jang. Zhu Yuanzhang rewarded another senior commander with 1,000 taels for a critical victory over the Yuan court during the late fourteenth century.[51] In a word, the Ming court made a substantial financial commitment to win and retain the allegiance of Great Yuan personnel in Lake Buir's wake. Now, let us consider the battle's rhetorical depiction.

Zhu Yuanzhang contextualized the Lake Buir victory in a wider struggle against northern enemies. These included the Liao, Jin, and (without ever naming it) the Yuan dynasties.

> The Song dynasty suffered from the difficulties of the Liao and Jin dynasties. Officers and soldiers were exhausted from the blades and arrowheads of battle; the common people were subject to the hardship of delivering grain. This resulted in ending the Song dynasty. The Sage Vessel fell into the hands of the Yi and Di. Mutton stench winds

[46] *MTZSL*, 191.2a, p. 2879. See also *MTZSL*, 189.1b, p. 2831; 189.14b, p. 2858.
[47] *MTZSL*, 191.2b–3a, pp. 2880–81. I thank Christopher Atwood for the Mongolian transcription.
[48] *MTZSL*, 193.3a–b, pp. 2897–98.
[49] *MTZSL*, 193.3b, p. 2898. See also *MTZSL*, 193.7a–b, 8a–b, pp. 2905–8.
[50] *MTZSL*, 193.5a, p. 2902. The next month, he submitted 213 horses to the throne and received 1,450 in cash. See *MTZSL*, 194.4b, p. 2915. I thank Christopher Atwood for the transcription of the name.
[51] *MTZSL*, 193.4a, p. 2899.

befouled the Nine Continents. This led to the abandonment of enduring standards. Caps and gowns, rites and music declined more each day. Because of this, We, as an ordinary man, rose up to save the common people from disaster and to drive the northern horsemen caitiffs into the steppe. It has been some years since We and the people have begun anew. Recently, the northern horsemen caitiffs have assembled great multitudes and once more established a kingly court. Their intentions are not peaceful.[52]

Zhu Yuanzhang revealingly casts the conflicts with the "northern horsemen" in terms of dynastic clashes by referring explicitly to the Liao and Jin dynasties. The emperor also described contemporary Mongol leaders in terms of a "kingly court" not just warriors or border raiders. In this passage, Zhu Yuanzhang foregrounds the deleterious influence of Mongol rule on culture. Mutton stench befouls China; proper cultural and moral standards deteriorate. Cultural collapse propels Zhu Yuanzhang into action.

Even as Zhu Yuanzhang framed the clash with the Yuan court as the most recent episode of an enduring conflict between northern polities and the Central State, Ming dynastic editors used individual Mongols as compelling narrative details to highlight Heaven's support and Zhu Yuanzhang's supernatural powers. As noted, before the surprise attack on the Great Yuan court, Lan Yu's men had been close to disaster for lack of fresh water. Enter the Mongol officer in the Ming army, Guantong, who we encountered in Chapter 3 as the Ming's envoy to Nair-Buqa in 1390. The foothill where Guantong and his men had pitched camp suddenly emitted a sound like a cannon. Upon further investigation, Ming troops discovered four springs. The springs provided enough drinking water for Lan Yu's men and mounts. "The excess flowed out like a brook." The *Ming Veritable Records* account observes that everyone joyfully exclaimed, "This is due to the good fortune of the court and the aid of Heaven." Previously, Zhu Yuanzhang had dreamt of a flowing spring on a hill northwest of the palace that ran straight to his feet. The stream on the steppe and the stream in the palace, it turns out, were the same, explained the helpful editors.[53]

The expression "the court's fortune and Heaven's aid" resonates nicely with the phrase "In the might of Everlasting Tenggeri (Heaven) and in the fortune of the Great Khan." This is the well-known formula that the Mongols used to

[52] *MTZSL*, 190.6b, p. 2879; *GQ*, 6.1.687. *Ming Veritable Records* editors write that this passage appears in Zhu Yuanzhang's communication to his commanding general Lan Yu. However, the text of that message as preserved in the *DMTZ* differs considerably in language and content, though containing some overlapping passages. See *DMTZ*, 5.4a, vol. 2, pp. 8–10. The version of this message preserved in *JSLJZ* (p. 445) does not include the lines about the Song dynasty's humiliation or the Mongols' deleterious impact on Chinese culture. Li Xinfeng (*JSLJZ*, p. 448, fn. 9) suggests that the version in the *Ming Veritable Records* represents a later embellishment of Zhu Yuanzhang's original.

[53] *MTZSL*, 190.2a, p. 2865.

explain their meteoric rise to power across Eurasia. It had been translated into Chinese, Tibetan, Persian, Arabic, and Latin. The editorial remark about "the court's fortune and Heaven's aid" may reflect Mongol personnel articulating new experiences in terms of familiar categories. Or perhaps Ming officials may have been depicting Zhu Yuanzhang in terms that both Chinese and Mongols audiences found understandable and appealing. Or the account we have today may result from a combination of the two.

Courtly fortune and heavenly aid aside, Guantong was likely experienced enough to site his camp near a source of fresh water. When news of the water spread, the springs came under Lan Yu's control. The editors note a single Mongol officer in their miraculous tale, but he was likely overseeing a contingent of Mongol cavalry troops serving as the main army's outriders. At the same time, the episode is another example of how the Ming court wove the integration of Mongolian personnel into its tale of the conquest of the Great Yuan.

Late in June, Lan Yu submitted his announcement of victory to the throne. He began with questions of rulership and legitimacy. He wrote that "when [the people] have a ruler, there is peace; without a ruler, there is chaos." He then turned to Heaven's Mandate, observing, "those who obey Heaven flourish; those who defy Heaven perish." This basic principle, said Lan, accounted for the fact that "fortunes may be enduring or passing; dynasties may prosper or decline." Having established these eternal truths, Lan Yu turned to the particulars of Zhu Yuanzhang and the Great Yuan. "During the late Yuan, [the Yuan ruling house] lost control of the empire. Thus, Heaven removed the Yuan's mandate." With his superior valor, wisdom, and virtue, Zhu Yuanzhang received Heaven's charge. "The ruler of the northern horsemen," however, refused to submit. He and his supporters chose resistance on the steppe. Lan Yu briefly recounted the campaign highlights, stressing "His Highness' sage virtue and supernatural awe." He also wrote that after their "lairs were overturned, the multitude of the Yi caitiffs all came in submission."

Happy with the report and its rhetoric, Zhu Yuanzhang turned to his court ministers and placed these latest successes in a larger historical context. He stressed that the Ming enjoyed greater success in its travails with the steppe than any preceding dynasty. Lan Yu's pacification of the steppe "not only eliminated the dynasty's worries about the north; it truly is good fortune for the common people throughout the realm."

In his rescript congratulating Lan Yu, Zhu Yuanzhang further developed several themes adumbrated in his remarks to his ministers. As noted above, he wrote of "the stench of mutton flesh that befouls the Nine Continents," the "disruption of ethics, caps and gowns, rites and music" under Mongol rule, and his success in "driving the northern horsemen caitiffs into the steppe." Although the renewal he had brought about was well underway, "recently

the multitude of northern horsemen caitiffs have once again established a kingly court; their intentions are not peaceful." Here again we see that Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors perceived the Great Yuan as a tenacious, rival court. It suffered losses but admitted no defeat. Only reluctantly, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote, was he forced to once again send his armies forth to prevent the threat from metastasizing into catastrophic disaster.

The emperor concluded his rescript by reminding his audiences about the Great Yuan court's loss of legitimacy. First, Zhu Yuanzhang invoked imperial seals as an emblem of dynastic vitality. In the face of Ming armies, "the ruler of the northern horsemen abandoned his seals and fled far away." Second, he returned to the question of elite support. "The princes, sons-in-law, empresses and consorts of the Six Palaces, and the people of the appanages all came in submission."[54] Here we see the early Ming court's strategy of dual marginalization. The northern horsemen ruler "fled faraway," and the majority of Chinggisid elites transferred their allegiance to the Ming.

Before moving on, let us review some key points from the preceding section. Ming imperial narratives of Lake Buir in 1388 confirm that Zhu Yuanzhang, his generals, and his ministers understood that more than two decades after its flight from Daidu, the Great Yuan still enjoyed considerable stature in eastern Eurasia. Despite a rhetoric that marginalized the Yuan court as a benighted group of stragglers that refused to acknowledge Heaven's will, accounts by Lan Yu, Zhu Yuanzhang, and the editors of the *Ming Veritable Records* focus on the Ming dynasty's seizure of key emblems of authority widely recognized in eastern Eurasia: seals of state, maps, population registers, written proclamations, court nobles such as empresses, escorts, princes, and administrators with Sinitic titles. Ming dynastic chronicles catalog the seizure of such symbols; they also detail the number of livestock that Ming armies confiscated. Advertising the Ming dynasty's possession of these material objects and bodies (both human and animal) undermined the Great Khan's stature as a competent ruler and generous patron. The contrast with the Great Ming emperor was clear. He won military battles. He seized rich booty. He rewarded members of the Great Yuan elite wise enough to offer him their allegiance. The Ming court competed for the loyalty of wavering Mongols on the steppe and those already incorporated into the Ming polity.[55] Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors repeatedly announced military victories over the Great Yuan in proclamations distributed at home. They believed such triumphs to be uniquely compelling illustrations of the Great Ming's superiority over all rivals.

[54] *DMTZ*, 5.4b, vol. 2, p. 10; *MTZSL*, 190.6a–7a, pp. 2873–75.
[55] *MTZSL*, 192.1b, p. 2886; *MTZSL*, 190.4b, p. 2870; *MTZSL*, 192.2b, p. 2888.

Political Theater

Zhu Yuanzhang understood political theater's value. This section considers two instances when the Ming emperor attempted to stage-manage the surrender of members of the Great Yuan ruling house. The first occurred in 1370 and the second in 1388. Neither unfolded according to Zhu Yuanzhang's wishes. They do, nonetheless, reveal much about the Ming court's efforts to control perceptions of the Great Yuan within the Ming polity and beyond.

As noted, the Great Yuan court made the best it could of Toghan-Temür's death in 1370. Ayushiridara was named Great Khan and successfully navigated the first imperial succession since leaving Daidu. The Ming court too tried to turn events to its advantage.[56] As shown, it celebrated its great military triumph at Yingchang. It also attempted to exploit an unexpected opportunity that came in the unlikely form of an eight-year-old boy named Maidaribala. The grandson of Toghan-Temür and the son of Ayushiridara, Maidaribala and his mother were among the Chinggisid nobles captured at Yingchang in June 1370. The Ming court had big plans for the little boy.

The Ming court carefully staged Maidaribala's reception in the capital. On July 9, he arrived in Nanjing. Officials requested that Maidaribala be offered as a prisoner of war to the Ming dynasty's Ancestral Shrine and that his seal of investiture be presented to the court.[57] It is not clear what exactly such a ritual would have entailed. During deliberations about surrender protocol for the emperor of the Xia dynasty a year later, Ming officials drew on Song dynasty precedents, which would have required the surrendering leader to wear a plain gown and black cap, prostrate himself on the ground, touch his head to the ground, and bellow "Long Live the Emperor."[58]

Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang announced that he would receive the boy with honor in a formal audience. The emperor donned a leather cap that accentuated his persona as military commander. His civil officials all wore formal court gowns. Palace eunuch and officials from the palace ceremonial office led Maidaribala into the emperor's presence. He "wore native clothing." Given what we know about Mongol court culture, this likely meant a lavish gold brocade gown, perhaps adorned with precious stones and trimmed with expensive fur. The boy first performed the five-kowtow ceremony in front of the emperor, and then offered a four-kowtow ceremony in the Eastern Palace to the heir apparent. At this point, the assembled civil officials changed into less formal clothes. Palace eunuchs gave Maidaribala a set of court gowns that the Ming imperial chronicles call "the clothes of the Central State."[59] An essential element of all court cultures, clothing is a key marker of identity. Here the

[56] *DMTZ*, 7.17b–19b, vol. 1, pp. 188–90.
[57] *MTZSL*, 53.5a–b, p. 1041.
[58] *MTZSL*, 67.3a, p. 1257; *GCDG*, 8.1.172.
[59] *MTZSL*, 53.5b, p. 1042; *GQ*, 4.1.419.

Ming court first highlights Maidaribala's status as a Mongol noble, his submission to the Ming emperor and heir apparent, and finally his new role as a Ming subject.[60] A change of garment signals transformation in identity.

The emperor told members of his Central Secretariat, who were among his most senior officials, that he absolutely rejected the example of past dynastic founders who mistreated members of the fallen dynastic house. "Now," the emperor announced, "the imperial consort (that is, Maidaribala's mother) Toghus is here"[61] and should be treated properly. Zhu Yuanzhang instructed his officials, "The northern horsemen only can eat meat and drink fermented mare's milk (*koumiss*). Further they cannot bear the summer heat. Make sure to arrange appropriate food and lodging. If he wishes to return, it is proper to send him back to the steppe."[62] Here, Zhu Yuanzhang is careful to note that Maidaribala is neither captive nor hostage. He is free to return home whenever he wishes.

As a gesture of munificence (and to keep him under surveillance), Zhu Yuanzhang lodged Maidaribala and other captured members of the Yuan ruling house just outside the capital. There, they were given a residence and funds to cover household expenses such as fuel and rice.[63] The following day, the Ming court reported news of Maidaribala's capture at both the Temple of Heaven and the Ancestral Shrine.[64] This was a major event.

Zhu Yuanzhang advertised his triumph as widely as possible. His audience included the Great Yuan court and its close supporters. But he was aiming far more broadly – Koryŏ, Jurchen lands, Annam, Champa, Yunnan, Bafan, the Western Regions (Central Asia), the Western Seas (the Pacific and Indian Ocean), all regions either directly or indirectly integrated into the Mongol empire. Zhu Yuanzhang wasted no time. The day after his distinguished guests' arrival, he circulated within the realm an imperial edict on the "pacification of the steppe." Zhu Yuanzhang ends by recounting Maidaribala's capture, his excellent treatment at the Ming court, and his new role as custodian of past Yuan rulers' souls. Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that the edict also be

[60] For full discussion, see Robinson, "The Emperor's Clothes."
[61] *MTZSL*, 53.5b, p. 1042; *GQ*, 4.1.419. Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 184.
[62] *MTZSL*, 53.5a–b, p. 1041; *Ming Taizu baoxun*, *juan* 5, p. 396. The dating of the *Precious Injunction* entry, the second year of the Hongwu reign, is incorrect, likely a simple scribal mistake. The day too seems wrong; it indicates that Maidaribala met with the emperor one week before his arrival in the capital as noted in the *Ming Veritable Records*.
[63] *MTZSL*, 53.5b, p. 1042; *GQ*, 4.1.419; *MTZSL* 55.3a, p. 1077. Maidaribala was housed on Dragon Light Mountain (Longguangshan). Soon after their arrival in Nanjing, Maidaribala's mother and five dozen other Mongol women received from the emperor silver- and gold-plated pieces of jewelry to go in the hair and sixty sets of clothing. See *MTZSL*, 54.5b, p. 1068.
[64] *MTZSL*, 53.5a, p. 1043.

delivered to Annam, Koryŏ, Annam, and Champa.[65] In a separate edict addressed to the "Yuan ruling family, its lineages, and its subjects" issued the same day, Zhu Yuanzhang again refers prominently to Maidaribala and his role at the Ming court.[66]

The Ming emperor dispatched a member of his Central Secretariat to the Koryŏ court with a multipoint edict that includes items directly related to the Yuan court and its supporters. It also mentions Maidaribala.

> Item: The regional commander has with due ceremony provided a protective escort to Maidaribala. They have already arrived in Beiping. We took pity that the descendent of the [Yuan] ruler would suffer from being treated the same as commoners, rebel leaders, and usurpers in surrendering. [We have] specially invested him as Marquis of Exalted Propriety.[67] I have gathered his dependents and his mother to live together. Food, drink, clothing, and needed items are provided in excess of those [received by Ming] officials and the people. We have specially preserved the sacrifices and rites of the Yuan [ruling house]; we cannot bear to be remiss in regards to the former kings.[68]

The edict repeatedly refers to Great Yuan nobles' special status. They are not to be treated as "commoners, rebel leaders, and usurpers." Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang formally recognizes Maidaribala's superior standing with an aristocratic title. He takes pains to point out that Toghan-Temür's family receives better "food, drink, clothing" and other items than Zhu Yuanzhang's own ministers. He claims to have reunited Maidaribala's family. His preferential treatment of the Great Khan's family extends to the realm of sacrifices and rites. Zhu Yuanzhang's message is clear: The Ming ruling house respects those who deserve respect.

If the message is clear, what were its audience's expectations? Zhu Yuanzhang appeals to the Great Yuan ruling house's former subjects who believed its members deserve honor and courtesy. Some such men had served in the Yuan government. Others felt the Yuan throne deserved recognition for its support of classical learning. Proper reverence for hierarchy likely influenced many. He also speaks to people beyond his borders. They were either under Chinggisid rule at the moment or remained closely tied to the Great Yuan. One such example was the edict's recipient, the Koryŏ's court. Zhu Yuanzhang was

[65] *MTZSL*, 53.6b-7a, pp. 1044–45. See also *DMTZ*, 2.6b-7a, vol. 1, pp. 246–47; *HMZZ*, 1.38b (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 553).

[66] *DMTZ*, 2.5b, vol. 1, p. 244; *MTZSL*, 53.7b–8b, pp. 1046–48.

[67] The edict in *HMZL* calls him Marquis of Exalted Righteousness (Chongyihou) (1.31b; *XXSK*, vol. 458, p. 47).

[68] *KS*, 42.639. See also *HMZL*, 1.30a–33a (*XXSK*, vol. 458, pp. 46–48); *XLZC*, in *MCKG*, vol. 4, pp. 1873–78. With minor differences, see also *HMZZ*, 1.38a–43a (*XXSK*, vol. 457, pp. 553–55). The version of the edict sent to the Koryŏ court seems to include the contents of at least three edicts contained in the *Veritable Records of the Ming Founder* under this date. See *MTZSL* 53.6b–7a, 53.7a–b, 53.7b–8b.

fully aware of the Koryŏ court's century-old relation to the House of Qubilai and the Great Yuan. In fact, those connections deeply troubled him. Through referential treatment of Maidaribala, Zhu Yuanzhang hopes to win good will, respect, and allegiance.

Maidaribala served as a pretext for Zhu Yuanzhang to remind a broad audience about the status of both the Yuan and Ming dynasties. In a November 1370 communication addressed to the people of Liaodong, which was still under Yuan rule, Zhu Yuanzhang lists the capture of Maidaribala, his mother, and other Mongol nobles at Yingchang as evidence that the Yuan dynasty was a fallen house.[69] Year after year, Zhu Yuanzhang returned to what he and his advisors believed was an important concern to the Great Yuan imperial family, proper reception of Chinggisid nobles and reverential treatment of the spirits of deceased Yuan rulers. Zhu hoped that Maidaribala's presence at the Ming court would show that the Yuan ruling family had accepted its new status. Through his comments about Maidaribala's descent from an exalted Yuan emperor, Zhu makes explicit his appreciation of the Chinggisid lineage's enduring prestige.[70]

Maidaribala, however, soon fades from view in such imperial chronicles as the *Ming Veritable Records*. By 1372, Zhu Yuanzhang broached the topic of Maidaribala's return with two Chinese ministers serving at the Great Yuan court.[71] In November 1374, noting that the boy had been in the capital for five years and was now grown, Zhu Yuanzhang finally decided to return Maidaribala to the Yuan court. The Ming emperor selected senior palace eunuchs Yuan Buqa and Temür to accompany Maidaribala on the long trip to the Yuan court in the steppe. The eunuchs were also to deliver gifts of patterned silk woven with gold thread and a brocade gown and a letter to Ayushiridara. As Maidaribala prepared to depart, he met one last time with the emperor. Zhu Yuanzhang assured the teenager that previously he had been concerned that the long difficult journey would be too much for a boy. Otherwise, the emperor said, he would have returned Maidaribala to his family's embrace long ago. Zhu Yuanzhang again reminded his ward about his status, observing, "You are a descendent of the Yuan ruler. When the dynasty perished, you were taken captive." In his letter to Ayushidara (see Chapter 7), Zhu Yuanzhang explained his decision to return Maidaribala. "We worry that you wander the steppe without a year of tranquility," Zhu noted solicitously, "and have no successor."[72]

[69] *DMTZ*, 2.31a, vol. 1, p. 295; *MTZSL*, 56.7a, p. 1099.
[70] For a similar example from a November 1370 letter to Ayushiridara, see *MTZSL*, 57.3a, p. 1119.
[71] *MTZSL*, 77.5a, p. 1417. [72] *MTZSL*, 93.2a–3a, p. 1621–23. Quotation appears on p. 1623.

The last time Maidaribala appears in the *Ming Veritable Records* is in a 1384 entry, where he is noted as a detail in the long illustrious career of Li Wenzhong, a recently deceased Ming general.[73] Maidaribala may have quietly disappeared from official Ming announcements and imperial chronicles, but he became an enduring element of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. The *Ancestral Injunctions of the Grand Progenitor* include the debate about the proper reception of Maidaribala, Zhu Yuanzhang's declaration to treat Maidaribala with respect, and Zhu Yuanzhang's words upon Maidaribala's departure from the Ming court.[74] Drawn from important moments of Zhu Yuanzhang's reign, the *Ancestral Injunctions* were intended to serve as a guide to the founding emperor's descendants.

So why did Zhu Yuanzhang draw attention to Maidaribala's presence at his court? The young Chinggisid noble was a useful way to demonstrate the Ming court's generous treatment of the Yuan as a fallen house. As noted, the Ming emperor provided Maidaribala with food and lodging, an aristocratic title, and a key ritual function. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors believed that the Chinggisid elite shared their conviction that offerings to one's forefathers were an important responsibility.[75] They were likely right. During its rule, the Yuan ruling house had mobilized the spiritual, artistic, and artisanal resources of empire to paint, weave, and sculpt portraits of the imperial house, which were kept in halls dedicated to the souls of deceased family members in Daidu.[76] Among the few things that Toghan-Temür and his entourage took with them in the rush to leave Daidu were the spirit tablets from the Ancestral Temple.[77] Further, the idea of using a member of the Yuan ruling house to care for his forefathers' souls did not end with Maidaribala's return to the steppe. As we will see shortly, in 1388, Ming armies captured another of Ayushiridara's sons. Zhu Yuanzhang wanted him to play the same role.

Zhu Yuanzhang likely saw control of Maidaribala as a way to shape succession issues at the Yuan court.[78] Based on evidence from later Mongolian chronicle sources, one scholar concludes that Maidaribala later became a Great

[73] *MTZSL*, 160.6b, p. 2478. [74] *Ming Taizu baoxun*, *juan* 5, p. 394–97.

[75] To revive Mongolian traditions, Möngke traveled annually to a site associated with Chinggis along the Kerügen River. See Atwood, "Imperial Itinerance and Mobile Pastoralism," p. 314.

[76] Charleux ("Onggan," pp. 209–20) shows that by the late 1240s, travelers began to take notice of portrait statues of Chinggis. In exchange for receiving food, the spirit was responsible for protecting the household or clan. For Yuan period portrait statues, see Charleux, "Onggan," pp. 219–24. On Tibetan tapestry portraits of the Great Yuan ruling house held in Daidu's monasteries, see Jing, "Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi." For halls dedicated to imperial portraits, see Nakamura Jun, "Gendai Daito"; Jing, "Financial and Material Aspects," pp. 232–36.

[77] *YS*, 47.4.986.

[78] Serruys (*Mongols in China*, p. 185) writes, "the emperor hoped Maidaribala to succeed some day as qaghan in his father's stead . . . [and] might recognize the Ming emperor as his overlord and by so doing put all of Mongolia under Chinese suzerainty."

Khan, known to history as Elbeg, who took the throne in 1394.[79] Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors understood that Chinggisid succession politics were fluid; cultivating ties with a potential future ruler could prove useful in the long term. Other Eurasian leaders held a similar understanding. As noted in Chapter 1, Tamerlane provided refuge and patronage in Samarqand to a Chinggisid refugee (Bunyashiri) who later returned to eastern Mongolia to become Great Khan (Öljeitu). When in 1405 Tamerlane set out on campaign against the Ming dynasty, he is thought to have included another potential Chinggisid successor in his entourage.

Throughout Eurasia in the latter half of the fourteenth century, Chinggisid boys were raised on speculation, as it were, with the idea that they might later prove valuable. Tughlugh-Temür (d. 1369–70) had been a sixteen-year-old youth raised from birth among the Oirats before being sought out to serve as the head of the Moghul khanate.[80] Consider too Yazdi's description of how Kabulshah Oghlan was made khan.

> Amir Husayn and Sahib-Qiran (i.e. Tamerlane) took counsel with each other and agreed that the best course of action was to elevate someone from the lineage of Chaghatai Khan to the khanate. To effect this, in the year 765 (1363–43) they convened an assemblage of amirs and *noyans* and held a *quriltai* to discuss the rule of the realm. It was decided there that Kabulshah Oghlan, the son of Dorji, son of Eljigidäi, son of Dua Khan, who had garbed himself in the raiment of a dervish in fear of the untoward vicissitudes of fortune, should be taken out of those garbs and adorned with the robe of the khanate.[81]

As a child, Khiḍr Khwāja had been spirited away "to live in the mountains between Kashgar and Badakhshan" to avoid murder at his uncle's hand.[82] In the late fourteenth century, Khiḍr Khwāja would eventually head the Moghul khanate.

The Chinggisid family remained Eurasia's premier aristocratic lineage. Political elites from Nanjing to Samarkand were keenly interested in its internal developments. On occasion, ambitious men sought to advance their interests by influencing succession within Chinggisid regional houses. Zhu Yuanzhang's actions here are best understood as part of the broader pattern of east Eurasian political life.[83]

[79] Buyandelger, "Shiwu shiji zhongyeqian de Bei Yuan."
[80] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 6–8, 14).
[81] Yazdi, *Ẓafar-nāma* 1.73f, cited in Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 17).
[82] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 20). Melville ("End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 319) observes that in the decades following the Ilkhanate's fall in 1335, military commanders "plucked from obscurity" Chinggisid nobles for use as figureheads.
[83] Noack ("Volga-Ural Region," pp. 304–5) notes that during a succession crisis within the Kazan Khanate in 1546, Ivan IV of Russia enthroned a Tatar vassal.

Two decades after the Ming dynasty's establishment, Zhu Yuanzhang continued to use Great Yuan elites in court theater. In 1387, his long-term foe, the powerful Great Yuan commander, Naghachu, was ordered to travel to the capital. At an audience within the imperial city, Zhu Yuanzhang accepted Naghachu's surrender and invested him with a prestigious aristocratic title. In August 1388, when Toghus-Temür's son, Dibaonu, and empress (who had been captured at Lake Buir) arrived at the Ming court in Nanjing, they were forced to turn over the golden seal of state and gold tallies of the Great Yuan. In return, Zhu Yuanzhang bestowed cash. The cash itself was a dynastic proclamation. Bronze coins and paper bills were inscribed with the Hongwu reign name or printed with the title Great Ming, respectively.[84] Further, he ordered that the Chinggisid nobles be settled in the capital, where local authorities were to provide them with housing and supplies – and of course to monitor them closely.

Zhu Yuanzhang intended to appoint Dibaonu as a custodian responsible for the continuation of state sacrifices to Qubilai's spirit, the same role he had assigned to Maidaribala in 1370. The emperor announced that since Qubilai had extended his benevolence to the people during his rule, it would be wrong to terminate his sacrifices. Zhu Yuanzhang thus planned "to invest Dibaonu with lands in accord with the ritual of treating a perished dynasty." Since he was an elite Chinggisid noble, Dibaonu's acceptance of this status would be tantamount to an acknowledgement that the Yuan was in fact "a perished dynasty." So at least was the Ming emperor's hope.

The plan quickly unraveled. Rumors surfaced that Lan Yu had raped the Yuan emperor's consort. Chinese records note that Lan Yu "had illicit relations" (*si*) with the Yuan emperor's consort. One historian interprets the incident as Lan Yu taking "some former Yuan princesses and palace women for his own concubines." The *Ming Veritable Records* notes specifically that the woman involved was a *houfei*. *Houfei* denotes an empress and/or imperial consorts, not a princess or palace woman. The scholar attributes her suicide to "observation of the Mongol custom whereby a ruler's wife could commit suicide upon the death of the ruler."[85] This seems unlikely. If the woman's husband had been Toghus-Temür, his death was still some months away. If she had been Ayushiridara's consort, she presumably would have committed suicide many years earlier, since he had died in 1378. The aforementioned historian cites Tan Qian's seventeenth-century chronicle, *Guo que*, as his source, but Tan is quite specific in calling the woman *Yuan hou*, literally "a Yuan empress." Tan, drawing on the *Ming Veritable Records*, attributes her suicide to shame.[86]

[84] Cartwright, "Paper Money of the Ming Dynasty," p. 172.
[85] Langlois, "Hung-wu," *CHC*, vol. 7, p. 159. [86] *GQ*, 9.1.688.

Zhu Yuanzhang exploded in fury. He upbraided (at a distance since the general was still in the field) Lan Yu for his "lack of propriety" and behavior unworthy of a great general. "Distraught," the consort committed suicide. Dibaonu lashed out at how Zhu Yuanzhang's leading general had abused his father's wife, a noblewoman of great standing at the Great Yuan court. The Ming emperor announced that given the situation, Dibaonu's extended stay in the capital was now impossible. Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang quickly shipped the Chinggisid noble off to Ryūkyū with provisions for his exile.[87]

Zhu Yuanzhang faced other problems in his campaign to secure the support of key members of the Yuan court. Shortly after the Dibaonu debacle, the Ming court received alarming news about two former members of Yuan court who had previously surrendered to the Ming dynasty. They were Köke-Temür's brother, Toyin-Temür, vice supervisor of the heir apparent's Household Administration, and Toghtai, a director in the Bureau of Military Affairs. The *Ming Veritable Records* notes tersely that they "conspired to revolt." On Zhu Yuanzhang's orders, Lan Yu apprehended the two men, executed them, and then publicly displayed their corpses at Jizhou, a strategic garrison located along the northern border.[88] This political theater was a show of power and intimidation. The *Ming Veritable Records* includes the event just days after the entry on Lan Yu's rape of the Yuan consort and Dibaonu's exile to Ryūkyū. Did Lan Yu's gross mistreatment of a Great Yuan noblewoman lead to anger, resentment, fear, or uncertainty among Mongol communities within the Ming polity? The *Ming Veritable Records* account is too sparse to draw firm conclusions. Zhu Yuanzhang, however, certainly thought in such terms.[89] He repeatedly ordered his commanders to stop their abuse of recently surrendered Mongolians. "Those who come in submission are uneasy," the emperor observed in 1387, and "those who have joined grow resentful."[90]

Lan Yu's arrival in Nanjing late in September 1388 provided an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between Zhu Yuanzhang and his leading general. It also occasioned further observations on the challenges posed by the Yuan court to Zhu Yuanzhang's dynasty. The day before Lan's arrival, the Yuan nobles, officials, and soldiers that Lan Yu had taken captive on the steppe were delivered to the capital under the guard of a highly decorated officer.[91] On September 26, General Lan Yu presented himself at court. Zhu Yuanzhang

[87] *MTZSL*, 192.1b, p. 2886; *GQ*, 9.1.689.
[88] *MTZSL*, 192.2b, p. 2888; *GQ*, 9.1.689.
[89] Serruys (*Mongols in China*, p. 243) notes that they were likely captured in either 1387 or 1388 and settled "north and south of the passes." He concludes, "no doubt, the 'revolt' was only an attempt by the prisoners to escape captivity and return to Mongolia."
[90] *DMTZ*, 3.20a, vol. 1, p. 344. Zhu Yuanzhang reprimanded his commander Feng Sheng for abusing surrendered Mongols. See *MTZSL*, 184.1a p. 2764; *MTZSL*, 184.4a, p. 2769; *DMTZ*, 3.20a, vol. 1, p. 344; *DMTZ*, vol. 1, p. 346.
[91] *MTZSL*, 193.3b, p. 2898; *GQ*, 9.1.690.

praised Lan Yu's great military achievements but chastised him on two counts. First, the emperor scolded, "When the consort of the caitiff ruler came in submission, you failed to treat her with propriety but instead indulged your lust, polluting and violating her." Second, Lan Yu had violated "the way of being someone's minister" by dispatching representatives to monitor developments at the court while he was commanding an army in the field.[92]

General Lan's two transgressions were linked. Dispatching a representative to monitor developments at court during his absence signaled several disturbing things to Zhu Yuanzhang. Lan Yu had his own ambitions. His interests were not fully congruent with those of the emperor. Finally, Lan Yu did not trust his ruler to act in his best interests when he was far away on the steppe. In a word, Lan Yu behaved as a potential challenge to the throne.

Although Zhu Yuanzhang described Lan Yu's rape of the Yuan emperor's consort as a product of lust, it was statement of power and status.[93] Possession and control of the Yuan emperor's intimates was Zhu Yuanzhang's prerogative. In 1368, when Xu Da seized Daidu, he immediately ordered Yuan palace eunuchs to stand guard over Yuan palace women, including consorts and princes, and warned his soldiers against rape or pillage.[94] Zhu Yuanzhang exercised complete control over the fate of the thousands of Yuan palace women. He released some and kept others. He married off some 500 women to ensure they had financial support.[95] Zhu Yuanzhang had taken at least one consort from the Yuan harem for himself. Further, Zhu Yuanzhang had married Köke-Temür's sister to his second son, Zhu Shuang (1356–95).[96] Thus, in seizing Yuan harem women, General Lan usurped the emperor's prerogative. He also foiled Zhu Yuanzhang's ambitions to use Dibaonu to cast the Great Yuan as a "perished dynasty" rather than an ongoing polity.

Surviving records shed little additional light on Lan Yu's actions or Zhu Yuanzhang's reactions. A few tantalizing details appear in *A Record of Treasonous Ministers*, a compilation of testimonies from nearly a thousand people implicated in Lan Yu's alleged assassination plot against the emperor (described in Chapter 3). According to one testimony, soon after the victory at Lake Buir, Lan Yu had seized the finest horses from the defeated Mongols.[97]

[92] *MTZSL*, 193.3b–4a, pp. 2898–99; *GQ*, 9.1.690.
[93] Zhu Yuanzhang also criticized Feng Sheng's abuses. See *MTZSL*, 184.2a p. 2765; Wang Shizhen, *Yanzhou shi liao*, *juan* 23, p. 83.
[94] *YSTBJ*, 68.3.1278.
[95] *DMTZ*, 16.13a–14a, vol. 3, pp. 185–87; *Ming Taizu yuzhi wenji*, 18.12b, p. 530; *Ming quan wen*, *juan* 14, p. 244–45.
[96] In his memoir, Yu Ben observed, "His Highness wished [Köke-Temür] to come to court and join the dynasty. He married [Köke-Temür's] younger sister as consort to the Prince of Qin." See *JSLJZ*, p. 254. As Li notes (fn. 9, p. 256), Yu Ben's comment must be considered in light of Zhu Yuanzhang's mixed feelings about Köke-Temür.
[97] *NCL*, p. 299.

We then read that in the fifth lunar month of 1388 "an envoy of the empress ordered Bolad-Temür" to present Lan Yu with two camels as a birthday present.[98] Empress here likely refers to a Great Yuan empress rather than a Great Ming empress. The Great Yuan empress retained servants and control over at least a portion of her economic assets. It further suggests that the empress perceived herself (and was perceived as) as a patron. Perhaps, given the nature of *A Record*, the testimony is intended to show that Lan Yu accepted gifts from a foreign ruler, a clear violation of his duties as Zhu Yuanzhang's man in the field.

Bolad-Temür's identity is unclear. An entry from the *Ming Veritable Records* indicates that in the fourth lunar month – that is shortly following Lan Yu's Lake Buir victory over the Great Yuan court – Zhu Yuanzhang appointed "the Tatar chieftain," Bolad-Temür, as assistant commander of Luzhou Garrison and ordered that he would retain command of "his subordinate Tatar officers, 250 men."[99] Three months later, Zhu Yuanzhang bestowed on Bolad-Temür, "a surrendered general of the former Yuan," a modest gift of cash and fabrics.[100] If these two entries describe the same man, Bolad-Temür was a Great Yuan commander of some stature whose allegiance the Ming court valued. In the weeks immediately following Lake Buir, he may have been acting as the Great Yuan's envoy to Lan Yu.

A Record notes that Bolad-Temür and Bai Xishan (the eunuch just noted) "escorted a princess who they turned over to" one of Lan Yu's agents. "[H]owever, Daidu's daughter was made a princess."[101] The identities of the princess (presumably of the Great Yuan house), Daidu, and his daughter are unknown. Clearer was the subsequent command relayed by Lan Yu's envoy that he "wanted girls and women."[102] In response, Bolad-Temür and another man with a Mongolian name, Esen-Buqa, escorted "the consort Shi'andari" to Lan Yu.[103] Shiandari does not appear in the *Ming Veritable Records*. *A Record* notes that the women were later all sent to the capital.[104] The sparse information sheds no light on the women's fate once in Lan Yu's custody.

The account in *A Record* does, however, give the impression that even after defeat at Lake Buir, the Great Yuan court, including its senior female members, maintained a high level of control over its subject populations. Ming demands were mediated through envoys, which on the Great Yuan side were men of stature. This makes sense in light of conditions at the time. The Ming army was encamped far beyond Ming dynastic territory. It was now suddenly responsible for managing as many as 100,000 captives. Without the assistance of captured Great Yuan nobles, it is hard to imagine how Lan Yu's forces could have managed.

[98] *NCL*, p. 299. [99] *MTZSL*, 190.4b, p. 2870. [100] *MTZSL*, 192.3b–4a, p. 2898.
[101] *NCL*, p. 299. [102] *NCL*, p. 299. [103] *NCL*, pp. 299–300. [104] *NCL*, p. 300.

Despite the public reprimand, Zhu Yuanzhang richly rewarded Lan Yu and his commanding officers with silver, cash, and textiles. In a show of imperial favor, he fêted them at Fengtian Hall within the imperial palace complex. At the banquet with his generals, Zhu Yuanzhang observed, "It has now been more than twenty years since Yuan fortunes ended and Heaven's Mandate fell to Us. However, the remnant northern horsemen are ignorant [of this]. They still establish kingly courts and desire to commit impure [acts]."[105] Here the emperor repeats a sentiment he had previously articulated in a congratulatory edict sent to Lan Yu upon his victory at Lake Buir. "In the past We expelled the northern horsemen out beyond the pass, but the people of the northern horsemen again established a kingly court and are intent on plotting chaos."[106] The emperor felt that the Great Yuan had recovered its status as a rival dynasty that endangered the Ming dynasty. Yes, the Great Yuan had suffered grievous military and political defeats in the last decade – the death of Ayushiridara, the fall of Yunnan and Liaodong, and the loss of tens of thousands of subjects who transferred their allegiance to the Ming dynasty. But Zhu Yuanzhang reminded his court of the renewed threat to justify his ongoing war with the Great Yuan.[107]

Zhu Yuanzhang showered his generals with handsome rewards and fulsome praise. For his outstanding service in the 1388 campaign, Lan Yu received the aristocratic title Duke of Liang.[108] The emperor also involved his civil officials in victory celebrations. At the banquet to honor his military men, Zhu Yuanzhang composed two poems on the theme of "Subjugating the Northern Horsemen" and ordered his ministers to write response pieces.[109] The emperor understood that fighting and celebrating war with the Great Khan were ways to maintain the support of his military commanders and civil ministers. Equally important, he grasped the importance of framing such dynastic enterprises through his Chinggisid narrative.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, let us return to a piece of Zhu Yuanzhang's fatherly advice to the Prince of Jin cited in the previous chapter – "Be on guard with northern horsemen in the ranks. On the surface, work to win their support;

[105] *MTZSL*, 193.4a–b, pp. 2899–90.
[106] *DMTZ*, 5.4a, vol. 2, p. 9. An alternate translation for the last phrase might be "they conspire and are disrespectful."
[107] For another 1392 example, see *DMTZ*, 3.24a, vol. 1, p. 352; *MTZSL*, 223.1a–b, pp. 3259–60.
[108] *MTZSL*, 194.4b, p. 2918. The investiture, however, did not occur until several months after the banquet.
[109] *MTZSL*, 193.4b, p. 2900. This may refer to the poem discussed in the last section of Chapter 5.

behind the scenes, plan carefully in preparation."[110] This counsel was sent on April 26, 1393, in the midst of a tumultuous two-month period for the Ming court. Less than one month earlier, on March 22, 1393, Lan Yu had been summarily executed on charges of treason. Days later after the execution, on March 31, 1393, Zhu Yuanzhang sent an officer from the Brocade Guard to update the Prince of Jin, thus connecting the capital to the border, the dynastic to the local, the official to the personal. "Regional Commander Lan was in league with the Commander, chiliarchs, centurions, platoon commanders, and squad commanders of the Anterior Garrison to rise in revolt," explained Zhu Yuanzhang. "They have been executed through dismemberment," he noted. He ordered the prince to dispatch men to dismember the Marquis of Huining (Zhang Wen) and his son, put to death all adult males in their family, and distribute their female kin as wives among the soldiers of the Prince of Jin's Escort Guard. The family's assets were to be seized and delivered to Nanjing.[111] In the weeks ahead, the Prince of Jin (and presumably other imperial princes) received other secret reports from their father. In one, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote tersely, "Item: most of the merit aristocrats (that is senior military men who had received aristocratic titles) have revolted."[112] A particularly brutal note reads, "Mince those three marquises. Cut down all their family members, eunuchs, and adult males in their households. Family assets and livestock go to your house. Your house will dispatch eunuchs to deliver the women [to the throne]. Obey this!"[113] Finally, in a memo to the Prince of Jin sent on May 27, 1393, Zhu Yuanzhang revealed the breathtaking extent of Lan Yu's plot. Two of the dynasty's most decorated military commanders testified that Lan Yu had briefed them and other dukes and marquises about his assassination plot. Senior military men who oversaw the emperor's imperial guard planned to murder Zhu Yuanzhang once Lan Yu arrived in the capital.[114] Later in the same memo, the emperor wrote sweepingly about how "those who harm the people are all the dukes and marquises who have secretly colluded among themselves in conspiracy." The prince and his brothers must be on their guard against all merit aristocrats. Don't trust any outsiders as military commanders. "Remember this! Remember this!" he urged.[115]

[110] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 85; Zhang Dexin, p. 91).
[111] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 84; Zhang Dexin, pp. 90–91). The *Ming Veritable Records* indicate that Zhang Wen was executed for his part in Lan Yu's conspiracy on April 28, 1393. See *MTZSL*, 226.2b, p. 3306; *GQ*, 10.1.741. I thank Professor Huang Ch'i-chiang for improving my understanding of this passage.
[112] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 85; Zhang Dexin, p. 91).
[113] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 85; Zhang Dexin, p. 91).
[114] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, pp. 85–86; Zhang Dexin, p. 91).
[115] *MTHQ* (Chang Bide, p. 86; Zhang Dexin, p. 92).

Writing more than six centuries after the fact, historians generally approach the Lan Yu purge as a fascinating, if horrifying, facet of early Ming political culture. As noted in Chapter 3, an estimated 15,000 people were implicated and executed on sedition charges. Victims ranged from the senior court elites to Lan Yu's family, friends, and even his sons' tutors. The large numbers encourage academic distancing as we search for the underlying reasons behind the spectacular violence. Was it a product of Zhu Yuanzhang's spiraling paranoia, perhaps brought on by the death of his principal wife, Empress Ma (1332–82), and his chosen successor, Zhu Biao (1355–92)? Was it cold political calculus, removing powerful men before they could move against an inexperienced and vulnerable successor? Are there patterns to be discerned about who Zhu Yuanzhang killed and who he spared? Did he protect or target his oldest supporters, men related by birth or marriage, men from the same hometown?[116] These are all important questions.

However, for contemporaries, accusations, fear, and punishments were immediate and overwhelming. In secret, hand-delivered communications, Zhu Yuanzhang informed his sons that his senior military commanders were bad man. They planned to murder him. They abused the people. They could not be trusted. They must be killed. The Ming founder thrust his sons into the maelstrom. This was not an elaborate political charade; it was an existential crisis that threatened their father's life and imperiled their dynasty's fate. This was the explosive context in which the Prince of Jin (and likely his siblings) received orders to guard against Mongols in their armies. The links among loyalty, the military, and Mongols on both sides of the border emerged as among the most burning issues of Zhu Yuanzhang's court.

Despite its rehearsed and staged nature, theater derives much of its power from its immediacy, its potential to vary from script – in tone, in word, in action. Zhu Yuanzhang's meticulously planned display of domination and control over the Great Yuan ruling family came undone, in large part at the hands of precisely the same men who had made the theater possible – his leading military commanders. Heaven's favor, fortune's operation, Zhu Yuanzhang's virtue, civilization's restoration, the Great Yuan's moral bankruptcy, these were all prominent elements of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. At the same time, military prowess' essential role was acknowledged, in fact celebrated. Court writers were careful to attribute military success to Zhu Yuanzhang's virtue and leadership, but commanders like Xu Da, Li Wenzhong, Feng Sheng, and Lan Yu (to mention only a few) were

[116] Mote, *Imperial China*, p. 582; Chen Wutong, *Hongwu*, pp. 560–92; Li Xinfeng, "Mingchu xungui"; Lin Fengjiang, "Zhu Yuanzhang shalu"; Liu Changjiang, "Lan Yu dang'an"; Lü Jinglin, "Lan Yu dang'an"; Massey, "Chu Yüan-chang," pp. 226–62; Wu Qi and Zhu Zhongwen, "'Lan Yu dang'an'."

indispensable. They led the troops that drove the Great Yuan from the Central Plains. They defeated the powerful holdouts like Vajravarmi and Naghachu. They wrested away evidence of the Great Yuan's authority, including seals of state, registers, maps, imperial family members, and valued livestock. They oversaw newly surrendered Mongols in the Ming armies.

Zhu Yuanzhang understood his commanders' worth and rewarded them with wealth and honor. He overlooked their regular abuse of power. Such privileges were part of an implicit bargain – military competence and political loyalty in exchange for a favored place in the dynastic order. The relationship, however, was always conditional. Doubts about battlefield competency, worries about loyalty, however small and however ill founded, could – and did – lead to a dramatically different kind of political theater. The eruption of chaos, violence, fear, and uncertainty at the dynasty's center undercut the Ming court's carefully crafted Chinggisid narrative. After all, what did it say about Zhu Yuanzhang as a ruler that he had lost the obedience and allegiance of even his most senior and trusted commanders? What sort of protection and patronage could new and foreign-born subjects like Naghachu, Nair-Buqa and others expect when their lord Zhu Yuanzhang executed thousands and thousands of subjects that seemed deeply committed to the Ming regime and shared a common cultural heritage?

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors developed a multifaceted story about the Great Yuan's rise, glory, and fall. They implemented political, military, and economic policies that encouraged acceptance of Ming rule, whether as subjects within the polity or as cooperative steppe leaders. The entire enterprise, however, required constant effort and expenditure. Proclamations issued, poem composed, wealth distributed, armies raised, wars won, negotiations conducted. But it could all come undone. Military failure, personnel blunders, and vindictive purges – they all gave lie to the inevitable triumph of superior Ming rulership. Regardless of whether there was a conspiracy afoot or who may or may not have been involved, the widely advertised accusations of treason and the emperor's savage purge damaged Zhu Yuanzhang's image as a capable sovereign and trustworthy patron. They likely created doubt about the throne's proclamations. Was Lan Yu a trusted commander or a scheming traitor? Zhu Yuanzhang had declared him both things at different times. What then were audiences at home and abroad to make of the Ming court's pronouncements about the Great Yuan's irreversible fall, the Great Khan's failed rulership, or the Great Ming's inexorable rise? The next three chapters shift to the Ming court's efforts to project its Chinggisid narrative beyond its borders to the rest of Eurasia.

Part III

A Tough Crowd

7 Letters to the Great Khan

Introduction

For more than two decades, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote to the Great Khan. To be more precise, he wrote to three successive Great Khans: Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, and Toghus-Temür. These letters often center on one of Zhu Yuanzhang's greatest passions – rulership.[1] He frequently speaks as one ruler to another as he tries to persuade the Great Khan to accept the Great Ming's rise. Again and again, Zhu Yuanzhang explains why the Great Yuan had fallen, why he had won power, and why the Great Khan should accept, even embrace, that change. This chapter explores how Zhu Yuanzhang made his case.

In his letters, Zhu Yuanzhang addresses acquisition and loss of power as well as alternate visions of rulership. He draws from the rhetorical toolbox described in previous chapters. Heaven's Mandate, the people's support, and fortune's end all make their appearance. He also refers to history. He returns regularly to past examples of Toghan-Temür's deficiencies as ruler. Just as often, Zhu Yuanzhang looks forward. He paints contrasting pictures of the Great Khan's future. In one, the Great Khan continues his rule of the Mongols on the steppe. He is able to protect his people and preserve his family. In another, the Great Khan faces certain destruction: the loss of his lands, kin, and subjects. Even care of his forefathers' spirits is endangered. The choice, Zhu Yuanzhang insists, is entirely the Great Khan's. Accept the Ming dynasty's rise and continue as ruler. Or resist and perish.

In these and other letters, Zhu Yuanzhang shows his determination to influence east Eurasian leaders' perceptions and actions. In addition to using military pressure and economic incentives, Zhu Yuanzhang worked to formulate compelling arguments. He did not merely announce his views to the world. He tried to persuade individuals, including the Great Khan, of his

[1] The chapter "Evaluating the Ancients" (*Pinggu*) in *Precious Instructions of the Ming Founder* (*Ming Taizu Baoxun*, 4.22b–33b, pp. 286–308) assembles dozens of brief discussions with court ministers that evaluate rulers in Chinese history. For Zhu Yuanzhang's "sage ruler complex," see Yang Yongkang, *Mingdai guanfang*, pp. 33–36.

vision of the past, present, and future. At the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence with the Great Yuan ruling house reveals the fears, hopes, and unexamined assumptions of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors at a formative moment in the dynasty's history.

Having claimed so much significance for Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Great Khan, I must also acknowledge some serious challenges in their use. First, this was not an exchange of letters. Only Zhu Yuanzhang's writing survives. We have not a single correspondence from a Great Khan. All evidence suggests that the Great Yuans never responded directly to Zhu Yuanzhang in writing. Thus, we are working with just one voice and perspective. Zhu Yuanzhang tries to anticipate the Great Khans' views, but whether he gets it right cannot be determined solely on the basis of his letters.

Second, Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Great Khan survive only in Chinese versions, but Mongolian translations likely accompanied the originals. To make its position more compelling, the Ming court tried to accommodate Mongolian political culture. It did so by drawing on equivalencies in language and values established under Mongol rule in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, in the case of Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Great Khan, claims about commensurability are difficult to substantiate without Mongolian versions that would allow close comparison.

A handful of letters in Mongolian from the Ming throne to Mongolian leaders do exist. Five brief correspondences from Zhu Yuanzhang to several Mongolian leaders are preserved as an appendix to an imperially compiled Sino-Mongolian dictionary. The editors likely selected these letters, because they represent paperwork that officials frequently processed – communications about possible allegiance with the Ming dynasty. During Zhu Yuanzhang's reign, the Ming court conducted hundreds of such negotiations with a wide variety of leaders. They all generated paperwork. These letters reveal how the Ming court represented itself in Mongolian to Mongolians. Brief and limited as they may be, these letters resonate with rhetoric and themes more fully developed in Chinese versions of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative, including those found in Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Great Khan.

One final consideration. Zhu Yuanzhang did not produce the letters to the Great Khan as they exist today. They are not in his hand. Imperial scribes later recopied the letters for inclusion in dynastic collections of the founder's writing and in the *Ming Veritable Records*. Thus, the neat, balanced calligraphy found in *Collected Writings of the Grand Progenitor of the Great Ming* 大明太祖皇帝御製集, for instance, looks nothing like the few known examples of Zhu Yuanzhang's writing such as the "Order of the Great Army" 大軍帖. More fundamentally, it is highly likely that court scholars reworked his prose.

Does this mean the letters are not his? As Chapter 5 shows, Zhu Yuanzhang, like most rulers in most times, depended on men around him to draft and polish texts issued in his name. However, he insisted on controlling the message. He guarded with special ferocity such prerogatives as they related to rulership, including commentary on and communication with the Great Khan.

Keeping all these difficulties in mind, I read Zhu Yuanzhang's letters as a canny ruler's attempt to pursue his interests. He used language, appeals, and threats he believed best suited to achieve his goals. Given his close attention to the Great Yuan court, he had a good sense of audience, but his knowledge was never complete or perfect. Finally, for clarity's sake, let me state explicitly that I am more concerned with what the letters tell us about Zhu Yuanzhang than what they reveal about the Great Khan and his court.

Before turning to the letters, a word on this chapter's organization. It analyzes Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence in some detail, often quoting directly from the letters to give a better sense of tone and rhetoric. The letters are examined in roughly chronological order, beginning with those addressed to Toghan-Temür and Ayushiridara and ending with those to Toghus-Temür. Such an arrangement shows how Zhu Yuanzhang tries to customize his approach to both individuals and changing conditions. Attention is also drawn to recurring themes and rhetoric seen in both letters to the Great Khan and messages to domestic audiences discussed in previous chapters. Chapters 8 and 9 examine the Ming founder's communications with several powerful Mongol nobles who backed the Great Yuan, Central Asian regimes like the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty, and leaders in Yunnan.

Writing to the Yuan Ruling House

Beginning no later than 1355 and continuing for more than four decades to the end of his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang communicated with members of the ruling Chinggisid house, senior figures in the Yuan government, powerful regional leaders, and scores of lesser military commanders. The Ming court tried to persuade the Yuan ruling house and its allies to accept the Yuan dynasty's irreversible fall and the Ming dynasty's inevitable rise. Its correspondence addressed Chinggisid resentment against the upstart Zhu Yuanzhang. Zhu Yuanzhang assured all audiences that the fallen Yuan dynastic house, including the souls of past Yuan emperors, would be treated with respect and generosity if it accepted its new status. Thus, the Ming court sought to sooth the sting of the Chinggisids' loss of power and to naturalize the new order.

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors developed an enduring repertoire of arguments and images but tailored the message in light of shifting conditions. To give one illustrative example, early in the 1360s, Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to negotiate his surrender to the powerful Yuan commander, Chaghan-Temür,

on advantageous conditions. In 1362, before a deal could be struck, rebels assassinated Chaghan-Temür. Chaghan-Temür's adopted son, Köke-Temür, succeeded to his father's military forces and political influence. Adapting to the new military and political circumstances, Zhu Yuanzhang quickly sent an envoy to Köke-Temür. Surrender, however, no longer interested Zhu. Instead, he tried to persuade Köke-Temür to keep his troops out of South China, where Zhu Yuanzhang was working to eliminate nearby Chinese rivals. By the late 1360s, things had changed again. Having consolidated control in South China, Zhu Yuanzhang highlighted a new message. Perceptive men through the realm, including both Chinese and Mongols, must accept the reality of the Great Yuan's inescapable fall and act accordingly.[2]

From 1367 onward, Zhu Yuanzhang's envoys and letters to the reigning Great Khan, the heir apparent, and powerful Mongol commanders hewed to a basic narrative that acknowledged the rise of Chinggis and more prominently Qubilai, their prosperous rule of the Central Plains, later descent into moral laxity and poor governance, and finally, irreversible loss of Heaven's Mandate. Zhu also stressed Eurasia's universal recognition of the Ming dynasty as the sole legitimate rulers of China and the irreparable rupture separating the Yuan dynasty from post-1368 Chinggisid descendants. In the nascent Ming court's narrative, these descendants were pale shadows of Qubilai, clinging precariously to power on the steppe even as they fought viciously among themselves. Further, they lacked any sense of loyalty, righteousness, or concern for the people's welfare, all key attributes of rulership that Qubilai had exemplified. Judged by any standard, these later Chinggisids were unqualified to rule and unworthy of men's loyalty. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors believed that discrediting the Great Yuan ruling house would facilitate the transfer of allegiance to the Ming dynasty. The following section examines Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence with Toghan-Temür, the emperor of the Yuan dynasty since Zhu had been a boy.

Writing to Toghan-Temür

In October 1367, just months prior to founding the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang sent a letter to Toghan-Temür, Great Khan and reigning emperor of the Yuan dynasty. The immediate impetus was a political gesture. Zhu Yuanzhang was returning a Yuan imperial family member, the Great Prince Shenbao, a man named Heihan (literally, the Black Chinese or the Dark Hero), and seven unidentified others to Toghan-Temür. The Great Prince had been among a reputed 200,000 people that Zhu Yuanzhang's army had seized in the

[2] Zhang Dexin, "Lüelun Zhu Yuanzhang yu Yuanchao."

wake of a critical victory over Zhang Shicheng, Zhu's last major regional threat south of the Yellow River.[3]

During much of the 1350s and 1360s, Zhang Shicheng had controlled a densely settled region south of the Yangzi River. His base centered on Suzhou and Hangzhou, both large, affluent cities. Zhang Shicheng's relations with the Great Yuan were tumultuous, but he officially was a loyalist. His ostensible support of the reigning dynasty, combined with generous cultural patronage, made his regime "the haven and hope of the scholar-gentry of South China."[4] Writers, painters, classicists, and others were drawn to the relative stability and prosperity of Zhang Shicheng's polity. Some took posts in Zhang's government. Others acted as political and cultural advisors. Still others maintained an aloof distance while pursuing refined cultural and social activities. In the mid-1360s, the horrors of violent civil war finally arrived in Suzhou and Hangzhou. After a ten-month siege, Zhu Yuanzhang's armies breached the stout walls of Zhang Shicheng's capital at Suzhou in October 1367. Zhang Shicheng was imprisoned before eventually taking his own life.[5] His regime's collapse marked a major step toward Zhu Yuanzhang's control of China. It also increased the pool of educated elite men who might serve Zhu Yuanzhang – if he could convince them of his legitimacy.[6]

The Great Prince was a person of some status at the Yuan court. In 1358, the Yuan heir apparent, Ayushiridara, ordered the poet and official, Wang Feng (1319–88), to compose an account of a banquet that the Great Prince held at his residence for a General Zhu. The Great Prince and Heihan may have been envoys sent by the Yuan court to Zhang Shicheng to win his support and to gather intelligence about the rapidly changing situation in Jiangnan. Regardless of their exact status, for Zhu Yuanzhang, returning them was a convenient pretext to strike a generous pose toward what he increasingly insisted was a doomed dynasty. However Zhu Yuanzhang may have depicted the Great Yuan, he understood that it was too powerful to ignore.

Zhu Yuanzhang's October 1367 letter to the Great Khan reads:

In the past, Heaven forsook the Song and Jin dynasties, and the Heaven-determined order of succession resided with Your Grace's forefather,[7] with the result that a

[3] *MTZSL*, 23.2a, p. 364. [4] Dreyer, *Early Ming China*, p. 27.

[5] Dreyer, *Early Ming China*, pp. 58–59. For Zhu Yuanzhang's campaigns against Zhang Shicheng, see Wu Guoqing, *Zhongguo zhanzhengshi*, vol. 6, pp. 456–71.

[6] Among others, Wang Feng (1319–88) had celebrated in writing about the Chinese, Mongol, and Uyghur men and women who had died in the Great Yuan's service. He also chronicled Zhang Shicheng's efforts to recruit scholars to his government. Such poems and prefaces appear throughout Wang Feng's collected writings, *Wu xi ji* (*BTGZ*, vol. 95).

[7] "Heaven determined order of succession" is an expression used in the *Analects*. The translation follows Legge, "Yao yue," *Confucian Analects*, Bk. XX, ch. 1, p. 350. D. C. Lau renders it, "The succession, ordained by Heaven" (Lau, *The Analects*, Book XX, p. 158).

common Tatar rose in the steppe, entered the Central State, regulated affairs on Heaven's behalf, and was ruler to the people for more than one hundred years. Now the allotted span of rule has ended with Your Grace. Armies stalk the realm; bold heroes arise in succession to seize the Central Plains. Desolation extends for thousands of *li*. Those who survive live in an age when in the morning they are under Qin rule and in the evening under Chu rule.[8]

It has been more than thirty years since Your Grace took the throne, and it has already been seventeen years since the common people have been without peace. Someone like myself was a commoner. My parents were born at a time when the Yuan dynasty had just settled the realm. How could I describe the ruler's beneficence? In years past, law and order were strict, which led the foolish and stubborn to fear [dynastic] awe and to harbor virtue. The strong did not bully the weak; the many did not abuse the few. Among the people, fathers were fathers, and sons were sons. Wives were wives, and husbands were husbands. Each was content with his life. There is no greater blessing than this.

In antiquity, rulers' unification of territory stopped at the Central Plains; the outlanders of the four quarters were not governed. Only Your Grace's forefathers took all the foreign lands and alien peoples within and beyond the four seas as their territory. This was without precedent in all antiquity. Who would have anticipated that in the year 1351, sorcerous men would rise up everywhere? Within three or four years, the situation within and beyond the seas was like disintegrating tiles. Your Grace repeatedly ordered the commanders to campaign, [but] dynastic strength weakened daily and sorcerous momentum grew stronger. Thereupon [you] ordered the senior commanders and great ministers to commit suicide by taking poison. Eight or nine times out of ten, [your armies] fell in defeat even before engaging in battle. Men who took up arms under the banner of righteousness and grew to become commanders such as Li Chaghan (d. 1362), Zhang Sidao, and Li Siqi (1323–76) did extirpate the sorcerous bandits. However, their meritorious service had grown lofty, and their powers had become great. They held the ambitions of bold heroes. Your Grace was unable to do anything about it. They were worse than the sorcerous men who revolted.[9]

This was no less serious than Cao Cao's submitting his proposal to Emperor Xian of the Han dynasty to [move the capital to] Xuchang.[10] Could Your Grace not have known this? Previously, when the sorcerous men rose up and powerful ministers grew defiant, it was not that sorcerous men rise up easily or that powerful ministers grow defiant easily. It is because Your Grace failed to understand that his forefathers regulated the myriad affairs on Heaven's behalf and served as the people's ruler. Thus, Heaven is about to forsake Your Grace as when it forsook the Jin and Song dynasties. The situation cannot be salvaged.

I was originally an ordinary man who, because a sorcerous rebellion rose in my native land and imperial soldiers failed to save [us], wrongly fell in with them. Over several years, because I assembled a great band, I came to control Jiangdong, Liangzhe,

[8] I.e., political control changed hands quickly.
[9] The text in *DMTZ* reads 生發 rather than 作亂.
[10] In 196, Cao Cao convinced Xiandi to act on the proposal by Xun Yu (163–212) and others to relocate the capital from war-damaged Changan to Xuchang.

Hunan, Lianghuai, the Hanmian River region (Shaanxi), Jiangxi, and the Ling-Guang region (the Guangdong and Guangxi regions), where everyone [now] can make a living.

Recently, when I eliminated Zhang Shicheng, who had alternately surrendered and revolted, playing with the court, I captured there the Great Prince Shenbao and other such men, in total eight men, and Heihan. When your forefathers destroyed the Liao, Jin, and Song dynasties, they thoroughly cleansed the ruling house, princes of the blood, and royal in-laws. To completely wipe out [a ruling house] can be said to be willing to let it die with no chance of returning to life. It is said, "When rulers hold the realm in perpetuity for ten thousand generations, fortune resides with Heaven. How can it originate with men?" Today with me it is not so. Thus, I return the prince and officials. I hope that Your Grace will bear in mind the continuation of his forefathers, so that we get along well. [I] will not [try to express] all [my thoughts here].[11]

The letter develops a narrative that explains the Yuan dynasty's inevitable fall and justifies Zhu Yuanzhang's emergence as a worthy leader. Zhu opens with the question of dynastic transition. He describes the Chinggisids' rise to power and rule of China after Heaven abandoned the Song and Jin dynasties. He immediately moves to the dire conditions of the last seventeen years. Having limned the Yuan dynasty's rise and imminent fall, Zhu Yuanzhang contrasts the early Yuan dynasty's social stability, moral order, and unprecedented territorial expanse with the precipitous collapse of Yuan rule since 1351. Zhu lists Toghan-Temür's numerous failures of rulership, including his inability to suppress the millenarian Red Turbans (the "sorcerous men"), his ineffective military command, and his mismanagement of men.

Zhu Yuanzhang illustrates his analysis with recent events and specific individuals. He identifies 1351 as a turning point when Red Turban millenarian forces first achieved critical momentum. Toghan-Temür's order that his generals commit suicide likely refers to his decision in 1354 to remove Toqto'a (1313–55) as general of a massive army that had done much to roll back Chinese warlords in eastern China. Shortly later, the throne commanded Toqto'a to commit suicide, which gave Zhang Shicheng time to rebuild his strength. It also fed his sense of invulnerability. Here Zhu Yuanzhang implicitly contrasts the Yuan court's disastrous personnel decisions with his own conspicuous success. Zhu triumphed against Zhang Shicheng where the Yuan court failed.

Zhu Yuanzhang spends much time discussing family, both in a broad social sense and a narrow dynastic meaning. Proper family behavior – when "fathers were fathers, and sons were sons" – formed a linchpin of much classical thought. It was both cause and reflection of a well-ordered society. Toghan-Temür's misrule makes such behavior impossible. Toghan-Temür also fails as

[11] *DMTZ*, 7.36a–37a, vol. 2, pp. 225–27. A slightly different version appears in *MTZSL*, 25.7b–8a, pp. 374–75. It does not appear in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, *XLZC*, *HMZL*, or *HMZZ*.

dynastic patriarch. Li Chaghan (also known as Chaghan-Temür), Zhang Sidao, and Li Siqi were all powerful commanders. In the 1350s and 1360s, they partially restored Yuan control in northern China. They also operated with increasing autonomy. For Zhu Yuanzhang, the Yuan emperor's inability to curb military commanders' ambitions directly contributed to dynastic collapse. This was one facet of Toghan-Temür's more general failure to preserve the patrimony established by Chinggis, Qubilai, and others. "It is because Your Grace has failed to understand that his forefathers regulated the myriad things on Heaven's behalf" that Heaven is about to forsake Toghan-Temür.[12] Zhu Yuanzhang depicts Toghan-Temür as an unworthy successor to his storied ancestors.

Taken as a whole, the letter is a stinging indictment of Toghan-Temür – as defender of social order, manager of men, and descendent of illustrious forefathers. He is a failed ruler. Despite his categorical condemnation of Toghan-Temür's reign, Zhu Yuanzhang still promises generous treatment of the Great Yuan ruling house. The return of the Great Prince and others is an attempt to reassure the Great Khan that Zhu Yuanzhang will not punish the Great Yuan. He explicitly rejects the Chinggisid precedent of "thoroughly cleansing" and "completing wiping out" fallen ruling houses. By assuaging fears of a massacre, Zhu Yuanzhang attempts to facilitate acceptance of his coming new order. He implies that his defeat of Zhang Shicheng is a congruence of interests. Zhang Shicheng had "alternatingly surrendered and repeatedly revolted, playing with the court." In other words, Zhu Yuanzhang had eliminated the Great Khan's enemy.[13]

After Daidu's fall, Zhu Yuanzhang continued his letters with Toghan-Temür. In May 1369, Zhu, now emperor of the Great Ming, sent another letter to the Great Khan.

> We have heard that from times past, those who possess the state (or "dynasty") are certain to understand whether Heaven's Mandate holds. [They] assess the shifting forces of success and failure in human affairs. When they advance, they are able to accomplish things; when they withdraw, they can protect themselves. This is an immutable principle. In the past, your forefathers arose from the north to occupy in full the Central Lands. Their armies were strong and their government effective. The Chinese and barbarians all submitted. At the time you succeeded to the throne, both home and abroad were still at peace. It was not that military forces were not legion or that men of talent were not plentiful. [However] when problems arose, the realm roiled

[12] In contrast, the editors of *Official History of the Yuan Dynastic* praise Qubilai's son and successor Temür (Chengzong), because he "remembered the observance of the ancestral precepts and [ever] thought of this bequeathing of guidance for [his] descendants." Translation from Cleaves, "Memorial for Presenting," p. 63.

[13] As Chapter 5 shows, Zhu Yuanzhang justified his war on Zhang Shicheng by enumerating Zhang's many transgressions against the Great Yuan court.

and responses were poorly handled. Your power was insufficient to exercise control. The result was that bold men fought incessantly, and the people were thrown into utter misery.[14]

Zhu Yuanzhang places rulership, especially Toghan-Temür's rulership, at the center of dynastic fortunes. He reviews the Mongols' conquest from the north, the recognition they won from both the Chinese and others, and the peace they established at home and abroad – all key markers of successful rulership in both the Chinese and Turco-Mongolian traditions. All this collapsed under Toghan-Temür. Zhu Yuanzhang then recounts his own unlikely rise – beginning humbly, winning people's support, securing territory, and finally, bowing to his supporters' demand that he take power. Zhu Yuanzhang in effect describes contrasting, inescapable, and irreversible trajectories of rulership.

In the remainder of the letter, Zhu Yuanzhang returns to the importance of rulers' judgment.

You also understood the [new] location of the Heaven's Mandate and withdrew to the steppe. Because We were previously a Yuan subject, [We] could not bear to pursue [you] relentlessly.[15] We have recently learned that troops harass the border and that the people of the frontier suffer from blades and arrowheads. Is it not that your former commanders act without authorization to instigate things? Or has it come about through your miscalculation? If you, unable to realize your errors, were to continue with such actions, it would be to fail to recognize the pivot or appraise circumstances. [We] fear that this would not be your good fortune. We now think carefully on your behalf. [You] should limit your territory to the northern steppe, cultivate virtue, and obey Heaven. Emulate how after the Song dynasty forded the Yangzi River to the southern side, it was able to preserve its lands and did not interrupt its sacrifices.

Do not act recklessly and bring disaster upon yourself. If [you] dispatched an envoy, as soon as he arrived, We would truly have the propriety of mutual accord. It is now early summer. Take good care of your health. I will not write all [my thoughts].[16]

Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors offer a bargain. Toghan-Temür can remain a ruler. Such an offer, Zhu insists, owes nothing to the Great Yuan's military strength or the Ming dynasty's logistical difficulties. Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang feels it's unjust to punish a ruler who had voluntarily withdrawn from the Central Plains. Zhu then extends to Toghan-Temür the option of denouncing his own military commanders for their attacks on Ming territory. If only Toghan-Temür recognized Zhu Yuanzhang's rightful status as the emperor of the Central Plains, the Great Yuan might continue just as the Song dynasty survived for more than a century after it abandoned its northern territory in

[14] *DMTZ*, 7.37b, vol. 2, p. 228; *MTZSL*, 41.3a, p. 819. It does not appear in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, *XLZC*, *HMZL*, or *HMZZ*.
[15] The *Ming Veritable Records* differs slightly. See *MTZSL*, 41.3a, p. 819.
[16] *DMTZ*, 7.37b–38a, vol. 2, pp. 228–29; *MTZSL*, 41.3a–b, pp. 819–20.

1127. Zhu Yuanzhang is redefining the nature of rulership open to Toghan-Temür. If the Great Khan abandons the Central State, he can rule the steppe.

Here and elsewhere, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors draw on ideas first articulated during the predynastic years of diplomacy with regional Chinese and Mongol rivals. In his 1367 declaration of victory over Zhang Shicheng, Zhu had cataloged Toghan-Temür's failures as a ruler, which ranged from lack of interest in matters of state and delegating too much authority to specific policy blunders such as bungling currency reform and hiring too many men to work on the Yellow River project. The same declaration had also noted that even with the benefit of the entire empire's economic and military resources, the Great Khan still failed to suppress rebellion.[17] Recycling key phrases and concepts even as new conditions unfolded is seen in most of the Ming court's communications with the Yuan ruling house and its allies. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors appealed to ideas and expressions that audiences knew well.

Late in November 1369, Zhu Yuanzhang again wrote to Toghan-Temür. He reviews familiar themes. Zhu recalls his origins as a farmer in a time of peace, the sudden rise of heterodox groups that threw the realm into chaos, and the failure of large, well-equipped Yuan armies to restore order. The millenarian groups grew in strength and bold men all rose up, recounts Zhu Yuanzhang. "With this," the Ming founder points out, "Heaven's Fortune was obvious and required no words to be clear."[18] The military commanders claiming to be servitors of the Yuan throne in fact plotted rebellion, he continues. Confronting such a predicament, Zhu Yuanzhang writes, he had no choice but to raise an army.

Having justified his decision to rebel, Zhu Yuanzhang recounts his inexorable rise. He reminds Toghan-Temür that Ming forces established control of most of southern China, while ostensibly loyalist commanders such as Zhang Sidao, Li Siqi, and Wang Baobao (that is Köke-Temür) warred against each other, devoting their energies to the consolidation of their satraps in Shaanxi and Shanxi to the north and northwest. This sets the stage for Zhu Yuanzhang's push into North China, conquest of Shandong and Henan, and, finally, occupation of the Great Khan's capital, Daidu.

Having offered his version of the recent past, the Ming emperor then turns to the future, assessing Toghan-Temür's options.

> Even before Our armies had arrived, you had already abandoned the ancestral altars in flight. We said you understood that barbarians' fortunes do not last one hundred years. To have been able to obey Heaven's Way and return the lands of Our China would have

[17] *YSTBJ*, 85.8.1615; *HMZL*, 1a–b, vol. 1, pp. 11–12; 1548 rpt. in *XXSK*, *shi* 457, pp. 31–32. No version of this text is contained in *DMTZ*, which has a single short communication to Zhang Shicheng (7.18b, vol. 2, p. 190).

[18] *DMTZ*, 7.38a, vol. 2, p. 229; *MTZSL*, 46.10a–10b, pp. 925–26.

been the superior strategy. Shortly later, the border generals reported that you had led remnant troops and were advancing against Kaiping. We recall that even in previous days when the ancestral altars were firm and dynastic coffers full, you failed to suppress the assembled brigands. Now with the beleaguered troops that followed you, you seek refuge far away in the steppe. If you emulated the Xiongnu of Han times or the Turks of Tang times, to appear and disappear irregularly, becoming a border blight, that would be a poorly considered plan.

I now fully possess all the lands of China and the wealth of 2000 cities. I control the assembled heroes and redoubtable armies that have fought for years. China is pacified, and the outer barbarians all come to join Us. There is no place for stalwarts to display their valor and no need for strategists to offer their plans. Yet you wish to be an enemy to me? Not to think to protect your land to preserve sacrifices to your ancestors but instead to wish to cast your remaining strength into the cold embers is to not understand Heaven's Mandate. We dispatch the iron riders to the four quarters and beyond the border. One million elite soldiers arrayed for two thousand *li* will reach directly to the north of Mt. Yin. If you managed to escape, it would be no more than dumb luck. In the spring when the weather grows mild and the steppe grasses turn green, it will be time for the Han armies to depart for beyond the passes; with the frosts and snows of winter, they will return to protect the border fortifications. Even if you had a million men, what could you do?

We deal in good faith with men and have clearly explained the crux of the matter for you so that you will rethink your plans and accept your place. Would it not be best if you were to obey Heaven and preserve offerings to your forefathers? Ponder this.[19]

Zhu Yuanzhang repeats his basic arguments. Toghan-Temür had escaped disaster in 1368 only because he recognized his loss of Heaven's Mandate and thus withdrew to the steppe. Even when he commanded the resources of the entire empire, Toghan-Temür failed to suppress the rebels that Zhu Yuanzhang had crushed. Now, Toghan-Temür's forces had been decimated. In contrast, Zhu Yuanzhang's army had only grown in numbers, experience, and resources. Continued Yuan attacks on Ming territory could have only one result – Toghan-Temür's demise.

A half year later in May 1370, Zhu Yuanzhang again approached Toghan-Temür.

The two envoys dispatched in the past with letters have not returned in a long time. Could it be that this is because they have been detained? In [Our] estimation, this is likely your miscalculation. Your thoughts are no doubt, "I was once the ruler of the realm with all within the four seas as my home. He is just one of my common subjects. Who is he to correspond with me?" Considered in light of ordinary sentiment, this is of course the case, but when viewed in terms of the situation now, it is completely different. Loss or retention of Heaven's Mandate is determined by whether one follows

[19] *MTZSL*, 46.10b–11a, pp. 926–27. See the passage from the *Shang shu*, the classical origin for many elements of Zhu Yuanzhang's rhetoric regarding descendants of the fallen house taking a place at the court of succeeding dynasty and supervising offerings to their ancestors. Translation by Legge, *Shang shu*, Bk. VIII, pp. 1–5, pp. 376–79.

or violates the people's hearts. The ancients had a saying, "The people are like water; the ruler is like a boat. The water can support the boat, and it can capsize the boat." Can it be that you do not understand this and stubbornly do not respond [to my letters]? The events of today are not what I wanted. In reality wherever the armies of the four quarters contend there are disruptions. Faced with such times, I was unable to seek tranquility for myself in my hometown. How could I have had intentions to possess the realm? When the assembled heroes were without success, my army's strength in contrast daily grew greater. Conditions were beyond my control. Thus we have today.[20]

Zhu Yuanzhang reiterates that current circumstances result from Toghan-Temür's poor rulership. The Yuan sovereign's failure to "accord with righteousness" lost the people's support and Heaven's Mandate. Zhu explicitly denies his ambition to seize the realm; it was thrust upon him by "conditions beyond his control."

Having interpreted the past and present, Zhu Yuanzhang then outlines the future.

If I could take [the realm] but did not, Heaven would be certain to use someone else. Can you retain possession of those lands and not lose them? When you consider things calmly, this is Heaven's Will and not something brought about by man. Why should you harbor resentment towards them? If you obeyed the Heaven's Way and dispatched an envoy, as soon as they arrived, we would establish good relations and wish each other well. You would have peace of mind and graze near the border, relying on Our awe to command subordinate populations. You can still be the ruler of a single region and offer sacrifices to your ancestors. If you plan not to produce an envoy but rather wish to use your remnant troops to raid as a blight to the border people, I will mobilize the Six Armies to penetrate deeply into the steppe.[21] Where will you go? It will be too late for regret even if you wanted to. Consider this carefully![22]

Here, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors try to persuade Toghan-Temür to accept dramatic recent changes. They address the resentment that Toghan-Temür, a sovereign of nearly four decades, likely feels both against a lowly former subject who now claims to be Heaven's Son and against a disloyal populace that scorns its proper lord. Zhu Yuanzhang promises that if Toghan-Temür overcame such feelings and came to grips with his new position in the world, he would remain a ruler, albeit a lesser one whose control of the steppe was contingent on the Ming throne's backing. By recognizing Zhu Yuanzhang's status, Toghan-Temür could ensure continuity in sacrifices to his

[20] *DMTZ*, 7.39b–40a, vol. 2, pp. 232–33; *MTZSL*, 51.8a, p. 1005. It does not appear in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, *XLZC*, *HMZL*, or *HMZZ*.

[21] This passage (from "If you are able" to "penetrate deeply into the steppe") appears verbatim in Zhu Yuanzhang's letter to Ayushiridara in October/November 1370. See *MTZSL*, 57.3b, p. 1120.

[22] *DMTZ*, 7.40a–40b, vol. 2, pp. 233–34; *MTZSL*, 51.8a–b, pp. 1005–6.

ancestors, that is, he could prevent his family's extinction. Failure to accept the new order, however, means certain destruction.

In the face of Toghan-Temür's continued silence, early in May 1370 Zhu Yuanzhang reissued the preceding message. He also broaches the subject of his previous envoys' murder.[23] "Since antiquity," the Ming emperor observes, "when the troops of two dynasties clashed, they never inflicted harm on those serving as envoys. Furthermore, your realm is already lost. What need is there to direct your anger toward a mere envoy?" Zhu Yuanzhang informs Toghan-Temür that Ming forces had recently captured more than a dozen Yuan officials, some who had personally served Toghan-Temür. More importantly, Zhu Yuanzhang stresses that Köke-Temür's attack on Lanzhou "with his sorry band" had been driven off. Köke-Temür himself had barely escaped capture.[24] "He is bound to be killed or captured any day now," Zhu Yuanzhang declares. The Ming emperor sent the Yuan official, Grand Councilor Cherig-Temür, to deliver his letter to Toghan-Temür.[25]

Over the course of thirty-two months from October 1367 to May 1370, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote four letters to the Great Khan Toghan-Temür known to survive today. There may have been others. The letters had several purposes. They explain the transformation of the Yuan/Chinggisid ruling house from an effective polity with Heaven's Mandate to a failed regime bereft of both Heaven's and the people's support. The letters do not offer a blanket criticism of the Yuan ruling house. They do not condemn the Great Yuan as a foreign oppressor. Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang focuses on Toghan-Temür's clear deficiencies as a ruler. Toghan-Temür's misrule led to political, military, and social collapse. He brought the Yuan dynasty to an end.

The letters offer clear choices about the future. Zhu Yuanzhang traces his rise. He notes his repeated military victories, his ability to win followers, his success in restoring order, and his possession of Heaven's Mandate. He does this in part to justify his seizure of power. He also wants to make clear his formidable power. The letters develop a case for why Toghan-Temür should bow to the inevitability of the Ming dynasty's rise. It is futile to flout Heaven's will, fortune's turn, and Zhu Yuanzhang's armies. On the other side of the ledger, Zhu Yuanzhang promises good treatment of the fallen house, including support for a reduced form of rulership on the steppe for Toghan-Temür and, presumably, his descendants. Toghan-Temür remained silent in the face of Zhu

[23] The dating is based on when the document appears in the *Ming Veritable Records*, May 6, 1370. See *MTZSL*, 51.8a–b, pp. 1005–6. The letter as it appears in *DMTZ* (7.41b, vol. 2, p. 236) refers to a Ming victory over Köke-Temür on May 2, 1370.

[24] For the Ming court's depiction of this battle, see Robinson, "Celebrating War," pp. 111–14.

[25] *DMTZ*, 7.40b–41b (2.234–36). It does not appear in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, *XLZC*, *HMZL*, or *HMZZ*.

Yuanzhang's epistolary overtures. The Ming emperor, however, continued to write to the Great Khan.

Ayushiridara

The succession from Toghan-Temür to Ayushiridara was a pivotal moment for the post-1368 Yuan court. It also required the Ming court to recalibrate its approach. Ayushiridara was the first Great Khan to take power since Daidu's fall. Unlike his father, Ayushiridara could not be held personally responsible for the Great Yuan's collapse, but neither could he claim to have been Zhu Yuanzhang's ruler or China's emperor. He was also generationally junior to the Ming founder. Finally, for reasons discussed shortly, Zhu Yuanzhang exerted far greater control over Ayushidara's family, both living and deceased, than had he over Toghan-Temür's.

Zhu Yuanzhang's first letter to Ayushiridara nicely illustrates Zhu Yuanzhang's adaptation to the new Great Khan. Late in 1370, the Ming emperor sent the following letter to Ayushiridara.[26]

Your general Köke-Temür, since fleeing from Taiyuan in disarray, has attacked Our Lanzhou with a rag-tag force.[27] The great army has pursued them as far as Dingxi. On the seventh day of the fourth month of this year, [the great army] inflicted a great defeat on them and executed countless numbers of them. [The army] captured alive Yan Fengxian, Han Zhaer, Li Jingchang, Chaghan-Buqa and other such men. Only Köke-Temür had already fled. [We] ordered the generals to pursue him night and day until he was captured. When they approached Suide Garrison, they captured Grand Councilor Cherig-Temür and learned through questioning that he was someone long employed by you. [We] specially ordered him to deliver a letter with our regards that you should consider the relative advantages of advance or retreat.[28] Later, I again sent a letter,[29] which said,

"During the summer of this year, an auxiliary force went to Yingchang, where it encountered your son, Maidaribala and the attendants of the palace and family, who

[26] In the *Ming Veritable Records* version of this letter, Zhu Yuanzhang addresses Ayushiridara as the Yuan heir apparent. It is not clear when this letter was sent to the Yuan court. The first part of the letter repeats nearly verbatim one previously sent to Toghan-Temür. Only the second part of the letter refers to the fighting at Yingchang, Maidaribala's capture, and Toghan-Temür's death. As shown earlier in the chapter, the Ming court occasionally resent unanswered letters, sometimes with additional materials covering more recent developments. Zhu Yuanzhang may have been doing the same thing here.

[27] On the Ming court's commemoration of the Lanzhou fighting, see Robinson, "Celebrating," pp. 111–14.

[28] This text, from "Your general" to the line about Zhu Yuanzhang sending Cherig-Temür with a missive appears with slightly different wording in Zhu Yuanzhang, *DMTZ* (7.2.236), where it is included among the letters to Toghan-Temür.

[29] The remainder of the text is identical to the previous letter. It is the first letter to Ayushiridara that appears in Zhu Yuanzhang, *DMTZ*, 7.2. (2.59–60). It does not appear in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, *XLZC*, *HMZL*, or *HMZZ*.

then came south in submission. On that occasion [We] recalled that your former ruler had recognized Heaven's Mandate and not resorted to military action but instead withdrew to the north. Was he not someone who understood the augurs? To suddenly abandon [Daidu] for the steppe is truly pitiable. Just at that time, *The Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* was completed. We thought a ruler of more than thirty years could not be without a posthumous title for later generations to use. [We] invested him with the posthumous title Obedient; it has already been used for [his] chronicles [in *The Official History*]. Your son, Maidaribala has also been invested as Marquis of Exalted Propriety 崇禮侯 and been given an annual emolument. Those who came in submission live with him in good health.

However, I don't know what your situation is like [now]. Can the people of the lineages of the north also accept submission as it was in the past? Last winter, [We] twice dispatched officials bearing letters with orders for the former ruler. The envoys have not returned in a long while. This was the former ruler's miscalculation. There is no need to dwell on things of the past. Now, I again send a letter to warn you of that which I formerly warned the previous ruler. If you were able to obey Heaven's Way and dispatched an envoy to come even once with official and personal communications, perhaps you would be able to have peace of mind and graze near the border, depending on Our awe to command subordinate populations. You can still be the ruler of a single region to offer sacrifices to your ancestors. If you do not produce an envoy, then you still plan to use your remaining troops to emerge and disappear as a blight to the border people. Then We will mobilize the Six Armies to penetrate deeply into the steppe. Your retreat will not be like that of the past. Think about your plans before it is too late. We will not mention remaining matters.[30]

The first paragraph is copied verbatim from the last letter Zhu Yuanzhang sent to Toghan-Temür five months prior in May 1370. If Zhu Yuanzhang believed an old message was equally relevant to the recently enthroned Great Khan, he also opened up new avenues of approach.

In this letter, Zhu Yuanzhang claims control of the Great Yuan's story, particularly the fate of the Great Khan's family. Zhu belittles its leading general, Kökë-Temür. He reminds Ayushiridara that in the wake of the fighting at Yingchang, his son and heir to the throne are in the Ming throne's custody. Zhu Yuanzhang takes it upon himself to explain Toghan-Temür's motivation for withdrawing to the steppe, assess his status as ruler, and even choose the posthumous name under which his spirit will receive offerings. The Ming emperor then extends the narrative to Ayushiridara's future by defining a new form of Chinggisid rulership. If Ayushiridara were to enter into negotiations with the Ming throne, which in Zhu Yuanzhang's mind seems tantamount to acknowledging the Ming dynasty's legitimacy, he might look forward to being "a ruler of a single region" near the Ming border. Here Zhu Yuanzhang strongly implies that Ayushiridara has lost control of even the steppe. Zhu

[30] *MTZSL*, 57.3a–b, pp. 1119–20.

Yuanzhang offers a diminished form of rulership entirely reliant on the Ming throne's "awe" for survival.

The Ming court was no passive observer in the fracturing of Great Yuan rule. Just weeks after the communication just described, Zhu Yuanzhang arranged residences for several Mongol nobles, including one of Toghan-Temür's sons and a royal son-in-law, who had recently submitted to the Ming throne.[31] At approximately the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched an envoy with a message urging the lineages (*zhubu*) of Qara-Qorum to surrender.[32] Zhu Yuanzhang made sustained efforts to recruit former Yuan personnel, including Mongols, through material incentives, ritual honors, and opportunities for career advancement.

In January 1371, Zhu Yuanzhang again wrote to Ayushiridara. Zhu Yuanzhang argues that Ayushiridara should come to terms with the Yuan dynasty's fall and the Ming's rise. Zhu Yuanzhang reviews the fortunes of the Song and Jin dynasties as a historical precedent for the Great Khan's consideration. Just as he had done in his 1369 message to Toghan-Temür, Zhu Yuanzhang offers the Song dynasty's ability to "serve the great" as a model for Ayushiridara. Through its willingness to adapt to new circumstances, relocating the capital to Hangzhou in 1127 and making annual payments first to the Jin and then the Yuan dynasty, the Song dynasty extended its rule by 150 years.

> The *Classic of History* says, "August Heaven has no favorites. It aids solely those of virtue."[33] This is an immutable principal from high antiquity. Consider it. From antiquity to the present, there has never been an everlasting dynasty. The path of their rise and fall is an enduring trend. For the small to serve the great is something the wise do not consider humiliating. In the past, when the Zhao family's Song dynasty of our China was about to fall, it was pressured by the Jin dynasty into relocating its capital to Hangzhou and into making annual payments. Later, your family destroyed the Jin ruling house.
>
> Your family also sent envoys to the Song dynasty, arranging that it would submit annual payments like during the Jin times. Although territory was divided north and south, its rule extended for one hundred and fifty years. This is clear evidence of [the efficacy of] the small serving the great.[34]

Zhu Yuanzhang recasts a controversial diplomatic accommodation – many at the time felt it humiliating – into an incontestable success. He also matter-of-factly

[31] *MTZSL*, 59.2b, p. 1150. Toghan-Temür's son was Shiktü. A "national uncle," Almas-Qaya, and the imperial son-in-law Mengge-Rashi were the others mentioned by name in the *Ming Veritable Record* entry. I thank Christopher Atwood for transcriptions of the personal names here.

[32] *MTZSL*, 59.2b, p. 1150.

[33] Legge (*Shangshu*, *The Shoo King*, part V, Bk. XVII, p. 490) translates the passage as "Great Heaven has no partial affections; it helps only the virtuous."

[34] *DMTZ*, 7.2.260–61; *MTZSL*, 77.5a–b, pp. 1417–18 (with slightly different wording).

proposes an inversion of the Great Yuan's standing in Eurasia. For nearly a century, Uyghur and Koryŏ kings, among others, had "served the great," that is, they had served the Chinggisid ruling house. Now the Great Yuan was to serve the Ming dynasty. In so doing, it would be reduced to the same, distinctly secondary, status as other polities.

Zhu next narrows his focus from the Great Yuan to Ayushiridara himself, including his likely treatment at the Ming dynasty's hands. Zhu Yuanzhang first impugns Ayushiridara's qualifications for rule in the Chinggisid tradition by drawing attention to his Korean blood. This was perhaps intended to ease the decision to abdicate power; Ayushiridara should not be attached to a position he did not deserve. Equally likely, Zhu was trying to undermine Ayushiridara's confidence in his supporters who might question his qualifications as Great Khan. Zhu Yuanzhang then ostensibly seeks to reassure Ayushiridara about how the Ming dynasty will treat members of the fallen Yuan ruling house, a central question for anyone considering submission. At once stressing his superior mercy and assuaging Ayushiridara's concerns, Zhu Yuanzhang notes that unlike the Yuan dynasty's poor treatment of the last Song emperor, he extends every kindness to Ayushiridara's son. In fact, Zhu offers to return the son as soon as Ayushiridara sends an envoy to the Ming court.

> Further, your dynastic custom has always been no surnames. Their lineages value the first-born and hold lightly those born of secondary wives. You are the nephew[35] of a Korean with a surname. Further you are borne of a secondary wife. How can you fail to perceive [this] but hold stubbornly without change? We see that when previous kings captured the progeny of another ruler, they were bound to present the captive at the ancestral shrine in a boastful display to the kingdom. Among them were also those who initially treated them with kindness and granted them titles, but later either forced them to commit suicide or executed them. Even your family too was so. The hair of the young Song ruler was shaved and he was made a Buddhist monk. In the end, however, he did not escape death. We, however, are not so. It has already been three years since your son came to the capital. You should quickly dispatch envoys to take [him] away.[36]

Zhu Yuanzhang concludes his arguments by reminding Ayushiridara that the Yuan ruling house lost control of the Central Plains through poor leadership. Toghan-Temür was too slow to mobilize his armies against spreading rebellion. In contrast, Zhu Yuanzhang has taken captive all those who had arrogated dynastic titles. Here Zhu Yuanzhang means his fellow rebel rivals during the 1350s and 1360s who variously declared themselves King of Wu, King of Han, King of Xia, and so on; he either destroyed or forced them into

[35] Ayushiridara was the son of Empress Ki, a Koryŏ-born woman who numbered among Toghan-Temür primary wives. It is unclear why Zhu Yuanzhang describes Ayushiridara as "nephew."
[36] *DMTZ*, 7.2.262; *MTZSL*, 77.5a–b, pp. 1417–18.

submission. In the closing lines, Zhu Yuanzhang observes that Toghan-Temür's inability to defend Daidu was "Heaven's Way" and another instance of "something that cannot be accomplished through man's power."[37] Zhu makes crystal clear that he is a far better leader than Toghan-Temür. Elsewhere, the Ming court had offered the same argument for Eurasian observers' consideration in the hope that they would feel less obligated to support the new Great Khan.

Sometime in 1372 or so, Zhu Yuanzhang sent a short letter to Ayushiridara.[38] "Since you and your father went north," Zhu Yuanzhang begins, "every month, people come in submission. They all declare themselves to feel displaced and uneasy; they suffer shortages of food and clothing." "Is it true?" Zhu asks ingenuously. Ayushiridara should halt his military campaigns. "To the east you rush into battle and to the west you bring death to the people. You throw away the men and mounts you have assembled in pursuit of unattainable resources. This is not the way to preserve oneself." In these few short lines, Zhu Yuanzhang conjures an image of a poor ruler who fails to provide his people's most basic needs and throws away his warriors in unwinnable wars. Perhaps Zhu Yuanzhang worries that such generalities are not enough. He offers a more specific example. "When you resided at Qara-Qorum," Zhu Yuanzhang recalls, "We dispatched the Six Armies encased in armor, which pushed forward for a battle three thousand *li* away. Did you achieve victory in the end?"

If only Ayushiridara were to "recognize the mandate" and accept the Ming dynasty's position, he would be spared further humiliations. To dispel Ayushiridara's suspicions, Zhu Yuanzhang first acknowledges them. Speaking in the Great Khan's voice, Zhu asks, "We and he are fierce enemies, so why does he offer instruction with a letter? It appears that there must be some deception." He assures Ayushiridara that he deals in good faith and emulates the ancients' example. He will spare the Yuan ruling family. "When the ancients won the realm, would they have completely extinguished people's sacrifices? It absolutely was not so. Thus, they connected the severed generations and raised up fallen kingdoms."[39] Here Zhu Yuanzhang draws on a line from the *Analects* describing how the ancient sage ruler, Shun, won the people's support. "He revived states that had been extinguished, restored families whose line of succession had been broken, and called to office those who had retired into obscurity, so that throughout the kingdom the hearts of the people turned

[37] *DMTZ*, 7.2.262. The version in the *Ming Veritable Records* uses the term "Heaven's Fortune" (*tianyun*) rather than "Heaven's Way." See *MTZSL*, 77.5a–b, pp. 1417–18.

[38] The letter is undated. In the text, Zhu Yuanzhang notes that it has been two years since Maidaribala's capture. This might mean 1371 or 1372 depending on Zhu's counting.

[39] *DMTZ*, 7.2.263–64; (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, 5.1a–b, pp. 161–62; *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 1b (*MCKG*, vol. 3, p. 1776).

towards him."[40] Zhu Yuanzhang notes that Toghan-Temür "understood Heaven's Mandate and went north; thus [he] achieved a good end."

"Besides," Zhu continues, "the Central State is really the former territory of the Han dynasty," which "the Northern horsemen will never be able to occupy permanently." Furthermore, "Now Our dynasty is in the fire phase (*yanyun*) and at its acme. If you violated Heaven's Mandate and came to attack [our territory], We fear that you would make yourself a prisoner." In other words, Ayushiridara's continued military adventurism will lead to his defeat and captivity. Zhu Yuanzhang and others intermittently discussed the Ming dynasty's rise in terms of an ongoing cycle of phases, water, wood, fire, earth, and metal, each inevitably succeeding to the next. Endowed with a classical pedigree, such a vision naturalizes political change. It also highlights the inescapable progress of one dynasty to another.[41]

Shifting from the cosmic to the personal, Zhu Yuanzhang ends with an intimate family matter. "Today's Maidaribala is not the Maidaribala of days past. In the last two years, he has become capable of expressing himself in language [presumably in Chinese]. He has been sent down among the people. He looks like a cow-herder boy."[42] All that can change, Zhu Yuanzhang reassures the Great Khan. Ayushiridara need only send an envoy and his son will be returned.

During the next few years, Zhu Yuanzhang sent more envoys to Ayushiridara, often on the pretext of arranging Maidaribala's return home. In 1372, Zhu Yuanzhang tried to persuade two scholars from Ayushiridara's court to come and retrieve Maidaribala. Maidaribala's return to the Yuan court, Zhu argued, would ensure "the ancestral sacrifices of your ruler will not cease."[43] Late in October 1374, Zhu Yuanzhang decided to return Maidaribala to the Great Yuan court. He sent another letter to Ayushiridara.[44]

The Emperor of the Great Ming Records Instructions to the Young Ruler of the Great Yuan:

Those who obey Heaven flourish; those who defy Heaven perish. Such is the universal view from antiquity to the present. It is not a new-fangled saying. From antiquity, there has been no thousand-year dynasty. This is a constant of principle. Furthermore, when you and your father held rule in China, the soldiers were many and the generals numerous, but you still failed to maintain your control. This led to those with the most soldiers having the aspirations of Wang Mang (45 BCE–23 CE) and Cao Cao (155–220), Sima Yi (179–251) and Zhu Wen (852–912).[45] The lesser fought

[40] Legge, *Confucian Analects*, BK. XX, ch. 1, p. 351.
[41] For discussion of the Ming dynastic name in such a cosmological (and political) context, see Chan, "Mingchao 'guohao'."
[42] Chapter 6 discusses Maidaribala's fate at the Ming court. [43] *MTZSL*, 77.6a, p. 1419.
[44] This letter is contained in *Precious Injunctions* and *Taizu ji*, *juan* 5.
[45] All were known as ambitious ministers who hastened dynastic collapse.

against each other, laying waste to the people. The least among them submitted in the east and surrendered in the west, flaying the people to support those above and below. [When] you and your father issued an order, who listened?

Given how things are now, you remain bewildered as if intoxicated with drink, befuddled like in a deep slumber. Why is it that you do not reflect? In essence, during the Zhizheng period (Toghan-Temür's reign title, 1341–70), with many soldiers and numerous generals, you were still unable to exercise control but instead were controlled [by them]. Today's forces in total number no more than twenty thousand men. You roam the borders in hope of a restoration. I simply don't understand what your plans might be. You yourself can see how circumstances today compare with those of the Zhizheng reign. When considered in this light, is it not foolish [to continue on as you do]? With seven or eight thousand, or ten thousand riders, you wish to contend with all of China. You again do not understand how things stand.

I say that if, perceiving Heaven's Principles, you were able to grasp what I have said, you would be certain to save [your] entire family on the steppe. Acting in accord with conditions of the time, you might come to a good end. How do I see things? [that is, how did I come to this conclusion?] Your forefathers possessed the realm in excess of one hundred years. When we consider the benevolence and virtue of the duration of their care and the increase of their populations, it is certain that their immediate end has not arrived. This is also the constancy of Heaven's Principles. If you do not come to your senses and do not emulate the deeds of the ancients, another day [We] will apply military force to you. Fortune and disaster cannot be predicted. In the past when you were at Yingchang, you abandoned the imperial son. It has now been five years since he came south in submission.[46] [We] have quietly cared for him in the countryside.

Now We learn that your encampment (here Zhu Yuanzhang uses a Mongolian word, *aghurugh*) is not far from Quanning. Considering that you roam the steppe without respite and lack a successor for the future, [We] specially dispatched Xianli and other such men to escort him back so that sacrifices to the Chinggisid family will not be interrupted. Consider this. If you do not reply and do not reflect [on your errors], disaster will not be far away.[47]

By this time, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors had fully developed their hortatory repertoire vis-à-vis the Yuan court. They first stress the futility of further resistance: All dynasties must end. Even prior to 1368, Toghan-Temür had lost control over his court ministers and senior military commanders. Ayushiridara is deluded to think that he can defeat the mighty Ming dynasty with just 20,000 men. The Great Yuan ruling house had failed even when it enjoyed the entire empire's resources. Having shown that further resistance is useless, Zhu Yuanzhang then offers Ayushiridara hope for the Yuan imperial family's survival. He acknowledges that the worthy rulership of

[46] *DMTZ* (7.56a, vol. 2, p. 265) has six rather than five years.

[47] "*DMTZ*, 5.3a–4a, pp. 165–67; (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, 5.3a–4a, pp. 165–67; *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 2b–3b (*MCKG*, vol. 3, p. 1778–80). Both the (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji* and *Ci zhu fan zhao chi* include "Great Yuan" in the salutation. With the exception of the omission of "Great Yuan" and the last line ("If you do not reply"), the *Ming Veritable Records* version is identical. See *MTZSL*, 93.2b–3a, pp. 1622–23.

Ayushiridara's forefathers deserves respect even today. The Yuan dynasty's allotted span of rule has expired, but Ayushiridara can still secure his family's future if he comes to terms with the Ming dynasty. With Zhu Yuanzhang's support, Ayushiridara's family can survive on the steppe. The souls of deceased Yuan rulers will be cared for. Members of the fallen house will be treated with courtesy.[48]

If the letter's arguments seem familiar, more striking is the opening salutation, "The Emperor of the Great Ming Records Instructions to the Young Ruler of the Great Yuan." Zhu Yuanzhang does not acknowledge Ayushiridara's status as emperor (instead calling him Young Ruler), but he does accord an analogous status to the Great Ming and the Great Yuan. The version of this correspondence contained in the *Ming Veritable Records* omits "Great Yuan."[49] In fact, surviving Ming documents almost never describe Toghan-Temür, Ayushiridara, Toghus-Temür, and their court after 1368 as the Great Yuan. *The Collected Writings of the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty* was first published in 1374 and later supplemented. The most common editions extant today were produced in the Jiajing (1522–67) and Wanli (1573–1620) reigns.[50] Another rare instance of the Ming court's use of Great Yuan appears in an edict issued to one of Qubilai's descendants, the Prince of Jingwu, as preserved in *The Collected Writings of the Grand Progenitor of the Great Ming*.[51] Again, this edict does not appear in the *Ming Veritable Records*.

So how are we to interpret this one instance of the emperor of the Great Ming addressing the ruler of the Great Yuan? One could argue that it is an aberration that sheds no light on contemporary relations between the Yuan and Ming courts. After all, what is one example against the hundreds of surviving examples where the Ming does not use the address Great Yuan? Another explanation is possible. Zhu's letter as preserved as the *Collected Writings* reveals that Ming imperial chronicles present a meticulously curated image of the Great Yuan and its relations with the Ming court. Sources compiled beyond the Ming court's control offer valuable insight. The *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*, compiled in the mid-fifteenth century, similarly pairs the Great Ming and the Great Yuan in the same passage. The Ming and Koryŏ courts did

[48] Jin and Dai ("Mingchu Zhu Yuanzhang," p. 73) argue that Zhu Yuanzhang's repeated references to preserving sacrifices for the souls of Yuan rulers meant that he "squarely faced the fact that the Yingchang and Qara-Qorum regimes were an extension of Yuan dynastic rule." More likely, Zhu Yuanzhang wished to win the support of the Yuan ruling elite and Ming subjects sympathetic to the Yuan ruling house.

[49] *MTZSL*, 93.2b–3a, pp. 1622–23. In *DMTZ* (7.2.264), this letters appears as one in a series; none include a salutation.

[50] Hou Xiaochen, "Dui 'Mingjun shengzhu'," pp. 93–95; Franke, *Introduction*, p. 200.

[51] *DMTZ*, 6.32a, vol. 2, p. 65.

on occasion formally recognize the simultaneous existence of the Great Ming and the Great Yuan. One suspects that if Mongolian versions of correspondence between the Yuan court and its neighbors in East Asia were uncovered, they would reveal greater parity between the Great Yuan and the Great Ming, at least during the late fourteenth century.

The single instance of addressing Ayushiridara as the Young Ruler of the Great Yuan in *The Collected Writings of the Grand Progenitor of the Ming Dynasty* does beg the question why editors retained such a usage. An imperially commissioned and imperially published work, *Collected Writings* was created to bolster Zhu Yuanzhang's qualifications as emperor. Thus, with few exceptions, the style and content of the works contained in *Collected Writings* demonstrate the literary grace and moral rectitude expected of a good emperor. Zhu Yuanzhang's relations with rival Chinese warlords prior to 1368, which survive in other compilations, are absent from *Collected Writings*. Zhu Yuanzhang's blunt, often thuggish, writing style, apparent in other sources, is polished to a tone appropriate for a sovereign.[52] Even if we conclude the title is simply a consequence of slipshod editing, it reminds us about the role of industrious imperial editors. They did more to shape our impression of the Ming dynasty and its place in Eurasia than we may imagine.

To recapitulate the previous paragraphs, the themes of family and rulership run through Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence to Ayushiridara. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Zhu Yuanzhang was a dynastic founder. As was true in his letters to Toghan-Temür, Zhu Yuanzhang turns frequently to posthumous affairs. The Ming emperor informs Ayushiridara that he has completed the Yuan dynasty's history, that is, the story of Ayushiridara's family. He leaves unstated – perhaps because it was so obvious – that the Great Khan has no say in the matter. Similarly, he alerts Ayushiridara that he has chosen a posthumous title for his father – again without consulting Ayushiridara, whose own court selected a far more auspicious and now nearly forgotten title, Huizong, Perspicacious Ancestor.

Zhu Yuanzhang did not ignore the future of the Great Khan's family. Maidaribala, Ayushiridara's son, appears in all Zhu Yuanzhang's surviving letters to Ayushiridara. He frequently promises generous treatment of the Great Yuan as a ruling house. He offers Ming military support to prop up what he describes as Ayushiridara's faltering political control on the steppe. Zhu Yuanzhang takes pains to show his empathy for both Toghan-Temür and Ayushiridara as rulers struggling to come to terms with dramatic, disorienting change. In one passage, Zhu Yuanzhang imagines the thinking behind Toghan-Temür's refusal to respond to his letters. "His thoughts were certainly,

[52] Hou Xiaochen, "Dui 'Mingjun shengzhu'."

'I was ruler to the realm; all within the seas was my family. He is but one of my common subjects. How could I open relations with him?'"[53]

Indeed, Zhu Yuanzhang likely considered his letters, like nearly all his writing, as instructional. They were intended to clarify the Great Khan's understanding of his circumstances and his options. He frequently reviews Ayushiridara's failure to care for his people and to secure military victories – all with an eye to guiding him to the only path forward, acceptance of Ming rule and cessation of restoration efforts. Zhu Yuanzhang's letters ignore inconvenient truths. Under Ayushiridara, Great Yuan armies had in fact inflicted major defeats on Ming forces. Ayushiridara did not recover Chinese territory, but he did secure diplomatic recognition from the Koryŏ court. It is not possible to know for sure how the Great Khan reacted to Zhu Yuanzhang's comments like "I simply don't understand your plans" and "You again do not understand how things stand." Zhu Yuanzhang's letters likely did little to change Ayushiridara's understanding of the past, present, or future.

The Ming Court's Response to Ayushiridara's Death

In spring 1378, the thirty-eight-year-old Ayushiridara died. He had been Great Khan for eight years. He had successfully navigated the Yuan court's first post-1368 succession and oversaw a modest dynastic revival. He pushed Zhu Yuanzhang into a more defensive military posture. Finally, he won formal, albeit temporary, diplomatic recognition from the kingdom of Koryŏ. When Ayushiridara died, the Great Yuan remained a threat to the Ming dynasty. The next section explores how Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to turn Ayushiridara's death to the Ming court's advantage.

Ayushiridara's death raised important political and ritual questions. What was Ayushiridara's relation to the Ming court? Who would determine that relationship? For a decade, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors had argued that in abandoning the Central Plains, Toghan-Temür had abdicated any claims on its lands and people. Similarly, Toghan-Temür's withdrawal from Daidu to the steppe signaled the Yuan dynasty's irreversible end. Thus, when Zhu Yuanzhang indicated his intention to dispatch an envoy to offer condolences on Ayushiridara's death, officials in the Ministry of Rites baulked. After pointing out the hardship of the long, difficult journey to the steppe, they raised their principal objection. Ayushiridara, they insisted, "had long departed China and gradually reverted to alien customs. Ritual protocol does not extend to him."[54]

Their protest opened the way for Zhu Yuanzhang to demonstrate his superior rulership. The emperor educated his officials:

[53] *DMTZ*, 7.53a, vol. 2, p. 259. This passage does not appear in other editions of this letter.
[54] *MTZSL* 119.1a, p. 1935.

The ruler takes the realm as his family. He [Ayushiridara] is not beyond that which is held up (that is, the sky) and that which holds up (that is, the earth). How can one put him at a distance? He may have alien customs, but the feelings of love and hate have never not been the same [for all people]. If [we] respect their ruler, then his ministers will be pleased. Further, in the application of ritual protocol, who wishes to violate virtue or abandon propriety?[55]

According to the *Ming Veritable Records*, the emperor then personally composed a prayer text for Ayushiridara.[56] Other sources note that Zhu Yuanzhang ordered civil officials to compose prayer texts for his review. Several versions of the prayer survive. The following is presented in Ming sources as Zhu Yuanzhang's work, preserved in *The Collected Writing of the Exalted Emperor*.

Oh, life and death, rise and fall are not the accident of a single moment but rather the fixed destiny of Heaven and Earth. Therefore the great and sage worthies, when perchance facing one of these four things, do not take it with ill-grace. They know the inevitability of Heaven's Mandate. It is because of this that one is utterly obedient to the Mandate of Heaven and Earth. Even in death, still there is no resentment. It is because of this that one [understands] Heaven's Mandate and is not bewildered. Further, your forefathers rose from among the poor and humble on the steppe. At that time, they held dominion over great wealth and served as the people's rulers. Their armies were strong and their lands expansive. [This] again was not [due to] a single man. None were able to defeat your humble forefathers with the result that they prepared their daggers, ordered their halberds, bent their bows, and cocked their arrows, sweeping all before them throughout the world. All the eight *man* [of the south] and the nine *yi* [of the east] submitted to them. This was because of Mandate's Heaven. With you and your father, it was time to let the sleeves of your gowns hang down [thus ordering the world] in order to enjoy the good fortune of peace.

Who expected that rebels would arise in Ru and Ying, that China [would be disrupted by] the assembled heroes with the result that you and your father's orders would go unheeded and in the end you would be unable to suppress them. Was this a matter of the affairs of man or Heaven's Way? We rose from among the poor and humble, taking refuge among the black-gowned common people. Morning and night, arising or in repose, there was no companion but [Our] shadow. There were no Three Armies or Six Hosts to overawe the realm. Who knew that [We] would fulfill the auguries and [come to] possess Heaven's Mandate? The multitudes assembled and followers were as numerous as clouds.

[We] replaced your family and became the people's ruler. In the past, you ruled the steppe, and We ruled the Central State. Because you and your assembled ministers stubbornly insisted that Heaven's Mandate had not shifted, assuming yourselves to be correct and Us wrong, [We] did not dare to send many [envoys]. [We] recently learned that You have left forever. [We] bear in mind in the past that [We] held the grandson of

[55] *MTZSL*, 119.1a, p. 1935; *Ming Taizu bao xun*, 5.30b–31a, pp. 398–99.
[56] *MTZSL*, 119.1a, p. 1935.

the Yuan. How could [We] bear not to offer sacrifices? When [Our] messenger arrives, [he] will offer sacrifices of meat and sweet wine to the dead. Your noble soul will never perish. We hope you partake of these offerings.[57]

Zhu Yuanzhang's prayer for Ayushiridara's soul includes many familiar elements of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative. It reviews the chaos of the mid-fourteenth century, the unexpected rebellions, Zhu Yuanzhang's unlikely rise from obscurity, and the workings of destiny and Heaven that unfold beyond human control. Far more intriguing is his commentary on the root of rulership. He rejects the notion that the Mongols' rise resulted from Chinggis Khan alone. This was perhaps the Ming court's most dramatic rewriting of the Great Yuan's story. Since no later than the 1230s, many Mongols explicitly attributed their success to Chinggis' unique destiny or good fortune. Chinggisid rulers declared their authority with the initial formula "In the might of Everlasting Tenggeri (Heaven) and in the fortune of the Great Khan."[58]

Zhu Yuanzhang instead highlights Heaven's Mandate's importance. This opens the way to justify Chinggisid recognition of the Ming dynasty's rise. One need not be a biological heir to the unique fortune of Chinggis to possess politico-religious legitimacy as ruler. Conversely, biological descent without Heaven's Mandate is insufficient basis to claim authority. The debate about the locus of politico-religious authority, biological descent versus other forms of validation, had a long pedigree, perhaps most famously in the Islamic world. It had also occurred within the Mongol world. During the early fourteenth century, one non-Chinggisid leader laid claim to supreme rulership in the Ilkhanate.[59] In 1365, another non-Chinggisid declared himself the Chaghadaid khan.[60]

Privileging Heaven's Mandate over Chinggis' unique charisma as the ultimate reason for political success opens the way for Zhu Yuanzhang to draw explicit parallels between Chinggis' and his own path to power. Zhu Yuanzhang notes that Ayushiridara's "forefathers rose from the poor and humble on the steppe" just as he "rose from the poor and humble." Armed with Heaven's Mandate, the victorious early Chinggisids won lands, subjects, and universal recognition from "all eight *man* of the south and the nine *yi* of the east." Similarly, Zhu Yuanzhang recalls that with Heaven's support, he gathered "the

[57] (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, 19.8a–b, pp. 559–60. An identical text is found in *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 8a–9a (*MCKG*, 3.189–91).

[58] "möngke tenggeri-yin kücün –dür; qa'an-u su –dür." Kotwicz, "Formules initiales"; Cleaves, "Initial Formulae." The Mongols varied the formula according to time and place.

[59] Brack ("Mediating Sacred Kingship," chapter 5) examines how the non-Chinggisid governor of Rum, Timurtash, attempted to legitimate his seizure of power in the early 1320s.

[60] This was Qamar al-Dīn described in Chapter 1.

multitudes" and his "followers were as numerous as the clouds." In Zhu Yuanzhang's retelling of the story, Chinggis' rise prefigures his own ascent.

Having established identical trajectories between the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Zhu Yuanzhang focuses tightly on family and rulership. "We replaced your family," he observes, "and became the people's ruler." Zhu acknowledges an analogous status between the two dynastic families, pointing out, "In the past you ruled the steppe, and We ruled the Central State." In other words, the Ming emperor addresses the Yuan Great Khan as one ruler to another. In exchange for lavish praise and generous sacrificial offers, Ayushiridara's "noble soul" should accept with equanimity the Yuan ruling house's fall and the Ming dynasty's rise.

The version of Zhu Yuanzhang's prayer found in the *Ming Veritable Records* is largely the same but does contain a few striking differences. First, the parallel drawn between Zhu Yuanzhang and Chinggis Khan is less prominent. Chinggis is only said to have risen from the steppe; the description of his humble beginnings, which exactly matches Zhu Yuanzhang's, is absent. Second, the *Ming Veritable Records* editors slightly reduce Chinggis' military might, eliminating the line "All were unable to defeat your humble forefathers." Third, they avoid explicit mention that Ayushiridara and his court insisted that they held the Heaven's Mandate and thus Zhu Yuanzhang was in the wrong. The *Ming Veritable Records* version reads, "You and your assembled ministers remained stubborn and unmoving, which led to repeated raising of border warnings."

As argued, the Ming court's claims to Heaven's Mandate suggest lingering insecurities. However, clear acknowledgment that the Yuan and Ming courts contested the possession of Heaven's Mandate is rare. This recognition of rival courts is nicely captured in the line "In the past, you ruled the steppe, and We ruled the Central State." One might argue that Zhu Yuanzhang was highlighting a distinction between past and present. We might translate the second half of the sentence in the present tense – "and We rule the Central State." Yet, if that was his intention, Zhu Yuanzhang could easily have inserted a contrasting conjunctive such as "whereas" and added "now" to sharpen the difference between then and now.

A markedly different version of the prayer text offered to the soul of Ayushiridara, attributed to the scholar Qian Su, circulated during the Ming period. Several accounts hold that when he learned that Ayushiridara had died, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered officials to draft prayer texts that he might consult. Qian Su's composition pleased Zhu Yuanzhang, who offered Qian a promotion.[61]

[61] *GCXZ*, 115.114–779–2.

Qian Su's version reads as follows:

Alas! Heaven is father, earth is mother, and humans live between them. The *qi* of Heaven and Earth has the deviant and upright. Thus, people are born as either Chinese and Yi (everyone who is not Chinese); exalted and lowly, esteemed and base are distinguished therein. Since antiquity, China has ruled the realm, and the barbarians of the four quarters have followed in submission. It is also similar to a family having a head, and the sons and younger brothers are obedient and transformed. The heart/mind of the ruler is open and just. It takes all within the cosmos as a single family, all those beyond the four seas as a single person. The reason why it sees all equally and treats them with benevolence is exactly for this reason. For successive ages, all discerning barbarians who came in submission accepted the imperial calendar and requested orders of investiture from the Central State in order to protect their territory. What is recorded in the chronicles is manifest and verifiable.

It was the middle period of the Song dynasty when the fortune of Heaven and Earth reversed course. Emperors Huizong (1082–1135) and Qinzong (1100–1161) were defeated with the result that after fording the river to the south, dynastic decline deepened daily. With this, the forefathers of the Young Ruler surged forth suddenly. They pacified their kind. They defeated and occupied the place of origin of the Jin (i.e. Liaodong) and thereupon annexed the Song to control China. It lasted for nearly one hundred years. This people of ours truly benefitted from this.

However, the constant of Heaven and Earth and the principle of China and the barbarian cannot in the end be eliminated. For this reason, their bit and halter were undone; within the seas there was struggle; the people fell into great misery. Heaven then ordered Us to rise from among the common people, to quell the chaos, and to restore order. For more than ten years, [We] destroyed the assembled villains and then moved the army northward. The Young Ruler, father and son, complied with Heaven's Mandate and rushed back to their native kingdom. China and the barbarians each achieved their place. Ah! Is this something that human effort could bring to fruition?

Considered in this light, what We won was in essence the recovery of what the Central State had long possessed. What the Young Ruler lost was the abandonment of what the steppe originally did not have. Thus, We have not wronged the Young Ruler; what could the Young Ruler hold against Us? We wish to succor people from afar to bring to completion the principle of treating all with equal benevolence.

Who told the Young Ruler to abandon this world so suddenly? Having learned of this, [We] feel such sadness that [We] are unable to control Ourself. Thus, [We] dispatch offerings to show [Our] grief. This is for your soul to inspect.[62]

Zhu Yuanzhang did not select Qian Su's composition as the official version of Ayushiridara's prayer text, but it appears in several Ming period literary collections. One passage in particular resonated with Ming period readers: Zhu Yuanzhang won back what belonged to China, and Ayushiridara lost what was not his. For some, especially later in the Ming dynasty, Mongol rule had been an aberration. Zhu Yuanzhang restored the proper, natural, and much preferred norm: Central State and steppe separate, distinct, and under different rulership.

[62] In Cheng Minzheng, *Huang Ming wen heng*, 1.15b–16a.

Toghus-Temür

Only two undated letters from Zhu Yuanzhang to Toghus-Temür are known to survive today. Internal evidence suggests that they were written in 1383 and 1388 or so. In 1382, Ming armies had taken control of much of Yunnan, which had been held by the Prince of Liang, Vajravarmi. In 1388, Ming troops had surprised the Great Yuan court north of Lake Buir, seizing thousands of court members and throwing Toghus-Temür into desperate flight. However, Zhu Yuanzhang does not mention either triumph. In previous communications to the Great Khan, he had frequently referred to recent military action to drive home his points. Perhaps the two letters written to Toghus-Temür were penned in 1383 and 1388 but sometime before the Ming victories. Again, given past precedent, Zhu Yuanzhang likely sent at least one letter to the Great Khan using Yunnan's fall as evidence of the Great Yuan's inevitable final demise. The letter may not survive. Given how soon after the Lake Buir debacle Toghus-Temür was assassinated, Zhu Yuanzhang may not have had time to send the Great Khan a letter.

The immediate impetus for the first letter was a Great Yuan envoy's release from Ming custody. In a gesture of loyalty to the Ming throne, Prince of Shazhou's court had previously seized and delivered the envoy to Zhu Yuanzhang. A Great Yuan envoy's presence in Shazhou (near today's Dunhuang) reminds us that Toghus-Temür actively sought to maintain alliances with past supporters. Throughout the late fourteenth century, a Chinggisid noble ruled Shazhou.

It has been fifteen years since you parted. It is commonly known that every single man to rule the northern lands has done so only through a Heavenly-conferred Mandate.[63] How could one aspire to it through the power of man? North and south of the Khanghai Mountains, east and west of the Great Sands, from antiquity to the present, although [there] has not been one single group to rule the people there, [they] have all been northern horsemen. Gazing up, [We] know that you reside north of Heaven's Boulevard. Today too the seat [of rule] and the category [of people] are fitting. However, have you yourself ever examined propitiousness? Have you ever put into practice the path of revering Heaven and devoting oneself to the people? It is only Heaven that confers the Mandate and only man who devotes himself to governance. Your previous sagacious kings' awe spread to distant lands and their virtue enveloped all within the seas. The common people felt grateful and devoted [to the rulers]. As their allotted span of rule neared one hundred years, their awe suffered damage and their virtue was abandoned. It ended with their return to north of the Boulevard of Heaven. Was [that] caused by the Heaven's Way? Was it brought about by the affairs of man? We do not know about these two matters. You should silently consider [this].

[63] This reading is tentative.

You and I are in the same world. You reside in the boreal steppe; We reside in the Central State. [We] have eliminated people travelling between the two. Recently the Prince of Shazhou[64] sent your envoy Temüge [to Our court]. Now [We] specially return him to you. [We] take this occasion to instruct you on the path of revering Heaven and devoting oneself to the people. If a fool were to discuss this, he would be certain to deny the principles I know. Although between heaven and earth, customs may vary and language may differ, those who govern the people and myriad affairs know their measure in all things. Those who are fit to rule cannot do so without Heaven.

Temüge has already been returned. You should consider this.[65]

Zhu Yuanzhang devotes much of this letter to describing rulership and the relation between the steppe and the Central Plains. He begins with a moment of change deeply significant for both the Yuan and Ming courts. When Zhu Yuanzhang observes, "It is has been fifteen years since you departed," he means the Yuan court's departure from Daidu in particular and the Central Plains in general. As Chapter 5 shows, the Ming court insisted that departure meant forfeiture of any claims to rule China. Fifteen years since the Ming dynasty's founding would be 1382, the year that Yunnan fell.[66]

Zhu next explores the theme of sovereignty, particularly the relationship among rulership, territory, and "kind." Zhu observes that northern horsemen have always ruled the steppe. "Today too the seat [of rule] and the kind [of people] are fitting," that is, a Mongol – Toghus-Temür – rules the steppe people. This conforms to enduring patterns. Zhu Yuanzhang implicitly acknowledges exceptional moments, when northern horsemen ruled both the steppe and the Central Plains. With their overwhelming awe and exemplary virtue, Toghus-Temür's ancestors had won the love and support of people far and wide. After a century of rule, however, both awe and virtue had failed. Toghus-Temür's family had returned north. Rather than detail Toghan-Temür's specific failures, Zhu Yuanzhang simply urges the Great Khan to ponder whether Heaven or man caused the return to the steppe.

In either case, the result was the same, a world of divided and distinct rule. Zhu Yuanzhang puts it succinctly: "You reside in the boreal steppe; We reside in the Central State." The word translated here as "reside" (*wei* 位) literally means place where one stands. It often connotes the place of power or throne. Zhu's phrasing suggests a clear symmetry: one ruler for each of two sharply contrasted territories, the steppe and the Central State. *Wei* has a neat parallel

[64] A 1391 entry in the *Ming Veritable Records* identifies the "Princeling of Shazhou" as Aruggeshiri. See *MTZSL*, 207.2b, p. 3084.

[65] *DMTZ*, 7.42a–b, vol. 2, pp. 237–38.

[66] The letter could not have been intended for Toghan-Temür who died in 1370 or for Ayushiridara who died in 1378. The letter is preserved in *DMTZ*, where it is listed under "Letters to the Yuan Ruler."

in the Mongolian word *saghu*, which means "live, reside, sit on the throne."[67] The next line about the elimination of travel between the two highlights the separation of the realms.

Despite his emphasis on two distinct sovereignties, Zhu Yuanzhang speaks as one ruler to another. They both govern populations and supervise myriad affairs. Both he and Toghus-Temür owe their position to Heaven, which alone has the power to confer the mandate to rule. Zhu explicitly mentions this idea three times in the letter. He had repeatedly broached the issue in previous communications to Great Khans, including the prayer text for Ayushiridara mentioned in the preceding section. Zhu Yuanzhang underscores his message of ruler-to-ruler relations by returning Toghus-Temür's envoy. At the same time, the Ming emperor reminds his Mongol counterpart about geopolitical realities. As noted, Shazhou, a kingdom that had been under Great Yuan control even after 1368, had delivered Toghus-Temür's envoy over to the Ming court, a sign of allegiance or at least the wish to win favor.

In the last known letter to the Great Khan, written in 1388 or so, Zhu Yuanzhang once more makes the case why Toghus-Temür should accept the Ming dynasty's rise. He moves back and forth between broad questions of Heaven's Mandate and human agency on the one hand, and specific decisions Toghus-Temür faces on the other. Throughout the letter, Zhu Yuanzhang draws on the story of the Great Khan's family to push Toghus-Temür toward the desired conclusions.

Who can know the length of rule of lands and governance of people? Heaven's Mandate changes in cycles. Ritual protocols are abandoned one after another. Throughout antiquity to the present day, this has been an enduring principle. It is not contingent on human affairs. In the past, when the August Yuan first arose, it established a foundation on the steppe. It quelled the barbarians. Among those barbarians, the great were rulers and the humble were chieftains. There were those who cultivated virtue, and relying on their inaccessible bases, held fast to themselves. There were those who, being fond of war, strove for domination through competition. These two both were subject to Heaven's Mandate. They [each] ruled a region. They took care of the people of a single place and a single area.

There are those who rule for several centuries. There are also those who rule for several decades. When Heaven commanded the August Yuan to found a dynasty, those who understood the mandate [of Heaven], upon hearing the news, came to join. [In the case of] those who remained recalcitrant and resisted the mandate, wherever carts or horse hooves passed, there was none not laid to waste. In this way, each and every ruler and chieftain was under their rule. Was this contingent on human affairs, or, in fact, brought about by Heaven's Way? In the past, the Yuan occupied China and established a capital in Daidu (literally in Youyan, the region around Daidu).

[67] I thank Johan Elverskog for pointing this out.

From the *bingzi* year of Shizu (1276) to the *wushen* year of Hongwu (1368) was ninety-three years. Fortune changed, and blessings ceased. Ruler and ministers returned north. It has now been twenty years. We have sent envoys to return princes of the blood. Periodically, we have released low-ranked men to you. There have also been those [We] returned to the north after, at the Fengtian Hall, meeting with them face-to-face to exchange words. Now, with no news of you distant in the steppe, [We] do not know how you are.

Oh! Do you, your ministers, and generals believe that the way of ruling the world is exclusively yours? If that in fact were so, would it not be the human heart? [In the case of] the penetration of the Way's heart to Heaven, unless one is an utter sage, how could one appreciate its subtleties?[68] We are of meager abilities. It has been twenty years since [We] replaced the Yuan in ruling the Chinese and the others. In recent years, commanders garrisoned in Liaohai have repeatedly reported that they hear that the border is in constant upheaval. This year, [We] will/have command[ed] the Barbarian Chastising Grand Commander to lead the commanders to complete walled cities in Daning. You and I will compare [strength]. Are you intent on contending for victory or defeat to determine success or failure? Or, will you pull back your troops, cease the border attacks, harbor your strength south of the Khanghai, and once more listen to what Heaven Above's mandate will be?

I have now specially instructed Hou Zongli, a gentleman of the interior serving as judge from the former Branch Secretariat, and Song Tianxing, current judge, to carry a letter and proceed to your location. Meet with your ministers and read the letter. The envoys will return with a report [to me]. [We] will write no further of other matters.[69]

Zhu Yuanzhang opens by asserting that humans cannot foresee polities' duration. They can only be certain that Heaven's Mandate "changes in cycles" and that ritual protocols are abandoned in succession.[70] In other words, polities rise and fall. Such changes, Zhu Yuanzhang insists, are "not contingent on human affairs." How to understand and respond to dynastic vagaries is the central question Zhu Yuanzhang places before the Great Khan. To drive home his argument, Zhu Yuanzhang recounts the experiences of the Great Yuan, which he conflates with the Chinggisid empire.

[68] The pairing of the human mind and the Way's mind likely draws from Song period notions about humans' innate desires that result from the physical senses on the one hand, and the moral qualities that humans develop through intentional cultivation of the Way on the other. See Bol, *Neo-Confucianism*, pp. 134, 205–6.

[69] *DMTZ*, 7.42b–43b, vol. 2, pp. 238–40.

[70] Zhu Yuanzhang talked about this issue in different ways. Near the end of his life in a communication to his sons, he explained that he was investing them as princes with their own territories to ensure the dynasty's long life. He wrote, "If we speak of the Zhou dynasty of antiquity, Heaven's Mandate and fortune were more than eight hundred years." *DMTZ*, 4.1b, vol. 1, p. 410. The Zhou had famously implemented a system of princely (or kingly) territories. Zhu Yuanzhang believed that proper organizational structures could increase dynastic longevity.

When the Great Yuan first arose, it met two basic responses on the steppe. Some leaders focused on maintaining local autonomy. Others actively vied for power against Chinggis and his family. In the end, both kinds of leaders fell subject to Heaven's Mandate, and both came under Mongol rule. Zhu Yuanzhang observes that greater and lesser rulers retained control of "a single place and a single area." Here the Ming founder displays a firm grasp of regional autonomy within the Mongol empire and the importance of local rulers. He also implicitly contrasts universal sovereigns like Chinggis, Qubilai, and himself with men who rule a single place and people.

Zhu Yuanzhang gradually turns to Toghus-Temür and his choices. The Great Khan's forefathers had incorporated those with the sense to submit and laid utter waste to those who resisted. The Great Yuan's subjugation of all rulers, great and small, resulted from Heaven's Way, claims Zhu Yuanzhang. The question for Toghus-Temür is what kind of ruler he will be. Will he accept the Ming dynasty's rise, which could only have been accomplished with Heaven's Mandate? Or will he resist? The result will be the same, just as it had been when the Yuan dynasty rose with Heaven's support. Toghus-Temür must determine whether he will do the sensible thing and preserve rule over "a single place and single area," that is, the steppe and its population. Or will he continue his border raids and ensure his fall?

Here Zhu Yuanzhang uses the history of the Great Yuan to advance his interests. He hopes that alluding to the Great Khan's forefathers will make his case more understandable and more compelling. To this end, he uses the respectful expression "August Yuan," which rarely appears in official Ming chronicles.[71] Yuan-period Sinophone sources commonly use the term Great Yuan. Zhu Yuanzhang draws directly on Yuan-period writing when he describes the Chinggisids' rise in the steppe. One such passage from the Yuan period reads, "The August Yuan established a foundation in the boreal region. It was a miraculous accomplishment, a magnificent deed. It unified China. The benevolence of its love of life is like Heaven and Earth in that there is nothing that it does not cover or hold up."[72] Further, one wonders whether the Mongolian translation of the letter used the term *degere tenggeri* where we read the mandate of "Heaven Above."

Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang understood the importance of personal relations, including family. He spends much time reviewing the Toghus-Temür's family

[71] In a letter to military commanders in Minzhou that predated the founding of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang uses the expression "August Yuan" when describing its dynastic rise and unification of the realm. See *DMTZ*, 7.14b, vol. 2, p. 182.

[72] Su Tianjue, ed., *Guo chao wen lei*, 40.13b–14a (*Yuanshi yanjiu ziliao huibian*, vol. 90, pp. 230–31).

fortunes. He refers to his generous treatment of Great Yuan personnel, who he had returned to the Great Khan. He entrusts his letter to a former Yuan official, who is accompanied by a Ming official of corresponding rank. Whatever reactions Zhu Yuanzhang's letter may have elicited, there is no evidence that the Great Khan ever sent a return message to the Ming founder.

Conclusion

From 1367 to 1388, Zhu Yuanzhang penned at least ten letters and one posthumous prayer text to three Great Khans. The themes of family, rulership, and change run throughout all. His overarching objective was to convince the Great Khan to accept the Great Yuan's fall and the Great Ming's rise. To make his argument compelling, Zhu Yuzhang appealed to things he believed dearest to the Great Khan, most especially family. He repeatedly praised the miraculous rise of Chinggis Khan's family, its glorious rule, and its regrettable decline. He frequently wrote about the future of the Great Khan's family, both living and deceased members.

Closely related to family was rulership. Zhu Yuanzhang fully acknowledged the Great Yuan's legitimacy, which garned the people's support and Heaven's Mandate through its matchless armies and effective governance. Zhu Yuanzhang noted more than once that he had been a loyal subject of the Great Yuan, until Toghan-Temür's ineffective management of men and selfish pursuit of desire had thrown the realm into chaos. Zhu Yuanzhang explained that he had been driven to raise an army and restore order. In letters to the Great Khan specifically and writings more generally, Zhu Yuanzhang justified his rebellion without categorical condemnation of the Great Yuan.

Zhu Yuanzhang spoke one ruler to another, but he made clear that he was a successful sovereign and the Great Khans are failing or failed leaders. In nearly every letter, Zhu Yuanzhang recounted his military, political, and cultural successes. He repeatedly took the Great Khans to task for poor judgment: "Rethink your plans and accept your place"; "Do not act recklessly and bring disaster upon yourself"; "You again do not understand how things stand"; "Why is it that you do not reflect?!" Periodically, Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to view things through the Great Khan's eyes – how he would feel if a former subject suddenly claimed Heaven's Mandate or if a political enemy offered counsel in letters. This seems less an expression of empathy than another reminder of Zhu Yuanzhang's superior grasp of the world, including the Great Khan's worries, fears, and options.

As the superior ruler, Zhu Yuanzhang offered the Great Khan a way forward. He tried to guide the Great Khan to the right choices. The Great Khan must accept the Ming dynasty's rise and Yuan dynasty's fall. Change is inevitable, the Ming founder reminded the Great Khan, as the Great

Yuan's own history shows. Zhu Yuanzhang assured each Great Khan in turn that he would treat members of the fallen house with generosity. He described a future where the Great Khan remains ruler of the steppe and its people. This form of rulership, Zhu Yuanzhang told the Great Khan, is natural and proper. The Mongol empire had been an historical aberration. Toghan-Temür's "forefathers took all the foreign lands and alien peoples with and beyond the four seas as their territory. This was without precedent in all antiquity."

Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang sought to make the Great Khan's new status more palatable by downplaying individual culpability. In his letters, Zhu Yuanzhang stresses that all regimes rise and fall. Fortune unfolds beyond man's control, even understanding. More important than the individual man or the affairs of men is Heaven's Mandate. Zhu Yuanzhang may have meant this line of reasoning as a challenge to the widespread notion that Chinggis and his descendants possessed unique charisma. He makes this case most clearly in his prayer text for Ayushiridara. He likely intended to lessen the Great Khan's personal sense of failure for accepting the end of Chinggis' extraordinary dynasty.

The letters are written in Chinese, replete with classical Chinese references, and draw on familiar features of Chinese political philosophy. At the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang had every reason to believe that both the message and its various forms would make sense to the Great Khan. The Great Yuan court had selectively adopted many elements of China's highly diverse political culture.[73] Furthermore, Zhu Yuanzhang used ideas that translated easily into Mongolian political tradition. Fortune, Heaven/*tenggeri*'s will, rulership judged by military success and care of followers, a hierarchy of rulers, and the need to care for ancestors' souls were all central concerns of Mongolian political culture. Much of Zhu Yuanzhang's letter-writing strategy assumed a high degree of commensurability and easy translation between languages and cultures. Contemporary transmission and reception of Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to the Great Khan are unclear, but they were unlikely to have circulated widely during the late fourteenth century. Major compilations of imperial edicts produced later during the Ming period omit most of Zhu's communications to the Great Khan, perhaps because they were considered letters rather than edicts.[74]

[73] Fiaschetti ("Tradition, Innovation and the Construction") argues that Chinese language documents issued by the Yuan state must be read in light of both Chinese and Mongolian political cultures rather than exclusively as evidence of the Mongols' wholesale sinicization.

[74] The letters appear in neither *HMZZ* nor *HMZL*. Only two, both to Ayushiridara, are included in (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji* and *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*.

The next chapter examines another facet of Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts to secure status and security for his dynasty, persuading the broad array of Chinggisid nobles and senior Great Yuan nobles to acknowledge the Ming's rise. If Zhu Yuanzhang met with singular failure to sway the Great Khan, the Ming founder found a more receptive audience among some of the Great Khan's followers.

8 South of the Clouds

Introduction

Yunnan – slightly larger than the state of Montana (or the country of Germany) – sits at the intersection of East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian cultural traditions. It figured prominently in Silk Road trade.[1] The Mongols' conquest of Yunnan conquest in 1254 advanced the Mongols' efforts to break the Song dynasty and show the region's strategic significance for the Central Plains. To secure Yunnan, Zhu Yuanzhang not only repeatedly dispatched envoys and eventually sent 300,000 men into battle. He also committed his dynasty to the long-term challenge of governing a distant, ethnically complex, and topographically challenging region with a strong tradition of autonomous rule.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section sketches Mongol rule in Yunnan with particular attention to relations among the principal political actors in Yunnan in the mid-fourteenth century. The second section details Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts to persuade the Prince of Liang and other leading families to transfer their allegiance from the Great Yuan to the Great Ming court. The third section concludes with a few words on Zhu Yuanzhang's references to the Great Yuan in Yunnan long after its fall in 1382. The chapter argues that the early Ming court tailored its Chinggisid narrative to Yunnan and depended on accurate, timely information about power, rulership, and legitimacy in Kunming, Dali, and smaller localities.

Mongol Rule in Yunnan

The Mongol empire recognized the local standing of the Duan family, which had held power since the tenth century as the ruling house of the kingdom of Nanzhao.[2] After Duan Xingzhi, the Prince of Dali, surrendered in 1254 to Mongol forces, the reigning Great Khan, Möngke, appointed him as Director

[1] Ueda, *Umi to teikoku*, pp. 123–26. [2] Fang Hui, "Xingsheng, zongwang, Duanshi."

General of Dali.[3] Generations of Great Khans acknowledged the Duan family's hereditary status, bestowing titles from the central government and granting considerable autonomy in local governance.[4] At the same time, the Mongols also introduced military and civil administrative structures to strengthen the Yuan court's control. A mix of Mongols, Central Asians, and small numbers of Chinese, generally dispatched by the central government, staffed these additional administrative structures. The Great Yuan court appointed officials to the Branch Secretariat, who assessed and collected taxes, adjudicated legal issues, and maintained agricultural colonies.[5] Operating side by side were influential Mongol nobles and other men who had rendered notable military service to the throne and were considered reliable.[6] Atop the entire administrative structure of Yunnan generally stood a Chinggisid family member. During the fourteenth century, such men often held the title Prince of Liang and were Qubilai's descendants.[7] Thus, the Mongols relied on an interlocking set of administrative structures that integrated traditions of both bureaucratic governance and patrimonial rule. They also sought to balance the interests of those who arrived in Yunnan both before and after Mongol conquest.

As was true elsewhere, the deterioration of the Great Yuan's central government's power in the mid-fourteenth century brought both danger and opportunity to Yunnan's leaders. Ambitious men aggressively expanded their spheres of influence against Daidu's weakening control. Beginning in the 1340s, Chinese sources note the rise of Luchuan, which scholars today identify with Mong Mao, a polity ruled by a Tai elite that oversaw Tibeto-Burman and Mon-Khmer populations.[8] Its capital was in today's Ruili, located on the Chinese side of the PRC-Myanmar border.[9] Luchuan's initial political consolidation owed much to its geopolitical significance for the Mongols' extended military campaigns against Burma from 1277 to 1303. To facilitate the movement of troops, supplies, and government officials, the Great Yuan expanded its relay system through the region. To exercise effective political control, it had also established a denser administrative network. When the Burmese campaigns ended and Yuan imperial attention shifted elsewhere, these

[3] Fang Hui, "Dali zongguan."
[4] For instance, the former King of Dali, Duan Xingzhi, accompanied Mongol armies into today's northern Vietnam before his death in 1260. For generations, his descendants too served in Mongol military expeditions.
[5] Li Zhian, "Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang," pp. 73, 75.
[6] Li Zhian, "Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang"; Zhou Fang, "Yuandai Yunnan zongwang"; Guo Xiaohang, "Yuan Yuwang Alatenashili."
[7] Zhang Daiyu, "Yuanshi zhuwang biao."
[8] For Luchuan's century-long rise and fall as a regional power, see Liu Yachao, "Shiping Luchuan."
[9] Fernquest, "Crucible," p. 32.

political, economic, and potential military resources became more available to local strivers.[10]

From the 1340s onward, Luchuan rulers and Yuan provincial administrative authorities clashed repeatedly. The Yuan court mobilized troops against the Luchuan ruler Sikefa at least twice, in 1342 and 1346.[11] The Great Yuan tacitly acknowledged Sikefa's expanded power. It appointed him to oversee the two newly reorganized Luchuan and Pingmian Pacification Commissions, which likely enhanced Sikefa's prestige and legitimacy.[12] Despite internal divisions, the Luchuan polity seems to have increased its dominance over neighboring Tai elites.[13]

Relations between the Prince of Liang and the Duan family too were fraught.[14] As noted, following the conquest of Yunnan, the Duan family shared responsibility for the governance of the Dali region with Mongol princes and the Yunnan Branch Secretariat.[15] Political intrigue at the highest levels of the Great Yuan in 1330, however, opened new opportunities for both the Prince of Liang and the Duan family.[16] In 1330, a succession crisis erupted between two loosely organized groups, one based in Shangdu and the other in Daidu. Given the high stakes, several Mongol nobles who had served in Yunnan joined the fighting, which spread far beyond the two capitals. One noble on the losing side, Tügel, withdrew to Yunnan, seized control of Kunming, killed many Branch Secretariat officials, and declared himself Prince of Yunnan. Both the Daidu court and rebel princes such as Tügel sought local leaders' military assistance in exchange for promises of titles and material rewards. Yunnan men exploited the chaos to raise armies and pursue their own interests.

The rogue nobles were eventually suppressed, but the campaign contributed to long-term changes to Yunnan's political landscape. First, and perhaps most fundamentally, the central government's control over Yunnan weakened. The Prince of Liang increasingly overshadowed the Branch Secretariat. The secretariat continued to supervise local administrative tasks such as taxes, but

[10] Lu Ren, "Yuandai xinan," pp. 58–65.

[11] *YS*, 40.3.865; 41.3.875; 41.3.877. For reconstructions of the Tai, see Fernquest, "Crucible," p. 36. A late fourteenth century Chinese account of Tai society explains Sikefa as "King Who Captures White Tigers." See Qian Guxun, *Baiyizhuan jiaozhu*, p. 21.

[12] *YS*, 44.3.926; Liu Yachao, "Shiping Luchuan," p. 61.

[13] Lu Ren, "Mingchao de guojia," p. 33; Bi Aonan, "Hongwu nianjian," pp. 102–3.

[14] Fang Hui, "'Bei Yuan' shiqi," pp. 35–36; Wang Pu, "Yuandai Yunnan Duanshi," p. 90.

[15] For the Duan family's role in Yunnan governance under Mongol rule, see Zhang Xilu, *Yuandai Dali*.

[16] The following two paragraphs draw from Fang Hui, "Tianli bingbian." For the English translation of related excerpts from *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*, see Cleaves, "Lingǰi of Aruγ," pp. 69–78.

increasingly by order of the Prince of Liang rather than by its own authority.[17] At the same time, the Duan family came to hold even greater sway in the Dali region. Second, the widespread fighting of the early 1330s and the resultant competition for local leaders' allegiance illustrated the value of independent military force as a source of power.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, relations between the Prince of Liang and the Duan family remained close but volatile. In 1363, an army from the newly founded Xia regime (based in neighboring Sichuan province) advanced into Yunnan.[18] The Prince of Liang abandoned his capital at today's Kunming, withdrawing his military forces to Chuwei (today's Chuxiong County). Despite previous conflicts, the head of the Duan family, Duan Gong, sent troops to support the prince. In exchange for military service, the prince granted Duan Gong a high level post in the provincial government. In addition, he accepted one of Duan Gong's daughters as a consort. Once the external threat passed, however, the Prince of Liang judged the Duan family's growing power an unacceptable danger. One mid-sixteenth century source claims that the Prince of Liang soon assassinated Duan Gong.[19] A few years later, a Xia dynasty army again attacked Yunnan. This time, Duan Gong's son, Duan Bao, not only declined to help; he responded with a mocking letter that incensed the prince.[20] The Duan family faced its own challenges in Dali.[21] Daidu's fall in 1368 and the Ming dynasty's expanding influence in Yunnan renewed questions of allegiance and family interests for the Prince of Liang and the Duan lineage.

In 1368, the reigning Prince of Liang was Batu, a direct descendant of Qubilai's fifth son, Hügeči.[22] Qubilai had famously campaigned in Yunnan before assuming the throne. The region's importance for Qubilai is reflected in his decision to send several generations of his family there. Beginning in 1267,

[17] Fang Hui ("Tianli bingbian") suggests that after 1356 officials were no longer appointed to the Branch Secretariat. However, Li Zhian ("Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang," p. 76) demonstrates that the Branch Secretariat remained staffed and operational until the Ming conquest of 1381–82.

[18] Yang Xueke, *MSSL*, 9b (*XXSK*, *shi* 350, p. 629); *MTZSL*, 19.5b–6a, pp. 268–69.

[19] Yang Shen, *Dian zai ji*, 14a–15a (*Lidai biji xiaoshu jicheng*, vol. 49, pp. 360–61).

[20] Tian Rucheng, *Yan jiao ji wen*, *juan* 4, in *Ji lu hui bian*, *juan* 60, p. 547a–b; Yang Shen, *Dian zai ji*, 15a (*Lidai biji xiaoshu jicheng*, vol. 49, p. 361); Wang Pu, "Yuandai Yunnan Duanshi," pp. 87–88.

[21] Fang Hui, "'Bei Yuan' shiqi," p. 36.

[22] Yuan, Ming, and Qing period sources are vague and contradictory about the relation between Batu and Vajravarmi, both being called the Prince of Liang. I have provisionally followed Wang Yiqiu ("Yuandai chuzhen Yunnan zongwang," pp. 8–9) in adopting Batu as the Prince of Liang circa 1341–72, followed by Vajravarmi 1372–81.

he sent his sixth son, two grandsons, and one great-grandson to serve in Yunnan.[23] During the early decades of the fourteenth century, several other princes of the blood were invested in Yunnan, usually with the titles Prince of Yunnan and Prince of Liang. The former commonly resided in Dali and the later in Kunming. Even after the Branch Secretariat was established in 1284, these nobles exercised broad military authority. The Prince of Yunnan and Prince of Liang maintained imperial bodyguard units (*keshig*), commanded additional imperial troops that numbered as many as 5,000 men, and levied thousands of horses on the local population each year. These princes also provided leadership during times of crisis, heading forces that could include Mongolian, Chinese, and indigenous forces as well as mixed units (*tammachi*).[24] Ties to local elites were deepened through the demand that indigenous leaders send their sons to the courts of the Yunnan princes. There they served simultaneously as hostages to ensure good behavior and as future leaders who enjoyed privileged access to the Mongol aristocracy.[25] The Yunnan and Liang Princes also played a role in the administration of the relay network that ran through Yunnan. Finally, Mongol nobles also acted as local patrons, securing funds for Confucian academies, contributing to public-good projects such as bridges, and supporting Buddhism monasteries.[26] As Mongol nobles, especially members of the Chinggisid imperial family, they commanded deference from even the highest-ranked officials in the Branch Secretariat. As noted, these princes, who might be based in Yunnan for only one or two years, remained closely involved in the empire's politics. The most spectacular example was the aforementioned extended succession crisis, when princes connected to Yunnan in one way or another aligned themselves with either the Daidu or Shangdu factions.[27]

From the narrative details provided, three overarching points can be synthesized about power-sharing in Yunnan under Mongol rule. First, Yunnan was important to the Great Yuan. From the initial conquest, Mongol nobles, most especially Chinggisid princes, exercised wide-ranging power in Yunnan, including both military responsibilities and administrative duties. Qubilai invested one son, two grandsons, and a great grandson as either the Prince of Yunnan or the Prince of Liang. Princes sent to Yunnan remained

[23] These were Hügëchi, Esen-Temür, Kammala, and Sungšan. See Guo Xiaohang, "Yuan Yuwang Alatenashili," pp. 176–77. Transcription of names follows with slight modification, Hambis, *Le chapitre CVIII*, pp. 3, 6, and 142.

[24] Li Zhian, "Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang," pp. 73–74.

[25] Li Zhian, "Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang," p. 74.

[26] Fang Hui, "Tianli bingbian"; Cleaves, "Lingǰi of Aruγ"; Kara, "L'inscription mongole"; Fang Linggui, "Yunnanwang." On the princes' ties to indigenous leaders, see Li Zhian, "Yuandai Yunnan Menggu zhuwang," p. 74; Zhou Fang "Yuandai Yunnan zongwang," p. 112.

[27] Guo Xiaohang, "Yuan Yuwang Alatenashili," pp. 179–82.

keenly interested in the broader family enterprise of imperial rule. They rotated through Yunnan and actively participated in political intrigue and military action at the highest dynastic levels. The early Ming court's rhetoric about Yunnan's physical and cultural distance from the Central Plains should not obscure its strategic significance for the Great Yuan polity or the Chinggisid family.

Second, stable Mongol rule in Yunnan required a modicum of local elite support. To secure such support, the Great Yuan co-opted families that commanded political and military power. It integrated them into local administration, appointing them to serve in official posts, granting them titles and honors, and acknowledging hereditary claims to special status vis-à-vis local populations. In Yunnan, the Duan family, a fallen ruling house, became the Mongols' chief collaborator. The relation was deeply fraught. Local ruling houses might come to identify with their Mongol sovereign and consider loyalty to him a family tradition. At the same time, however, ruling houses retained their own ambitions. These involved the desire for enhanced status with regard to local competitors, which might require either deeper dependence on or greater autonomy from the Mongol throne.

Finally, the relation of Chinggisid princes to the central court, the dynamics between those princes and the Duan ruling family, and between the Duan family and other local political interests changed over time. Perhaps the most critical structural variable in these relations was the central government's interest and ability to impose its will on Yunnan's chief political actors. Qubilai signaled a deep interest by committing several generations of his direct descendants to Mongol rule in Yunnan and by establishing a fully articulated bureaucracy in the form of the Branch Secretariat. As was true in many parts of the empire, by the 1340s the central court's inclination and capacity to project power to Yunnan had diminished. Toghan-Temür and his advisors, however, never abandoned Yunnan. The central government continued to appoint officials to the Yunnan Branch Secretariat. It confirmed the titles and status of Mongol princes in Yunnan. Yet, the Prince of Liang, the Duan family, and the Luchuan polity carved out greater autonomy and more openly pursued their interests. On the eve of the Ming dynasty's founding, there is little evidence that any one of these three political actors deeply questioned the Great Yuan's legitimacy or wished to sever ties with the Chinggisid ruling house. The Ming dynasty would have to convince them that further change, including a transfer of allegiance, was in their interests.

Great Yuan Regional Governance after Daidu's Fall

For its first decade and more, the Ming dynasty exercised little control in Yunnan. The Prince of Liang refused to recognize the Ming court. Great Yuan

governance in Yunnan continued without perceptible interruption after the Ming's founding. It seems nearly certain that the Prince of Liang's realm produced the same sort of administrative paperwork excavated in Qara-Qoto, but none survives. One stele inscription refers to the Branch Military Commission of Yunnan, which oversaw agricultural colonies established by the state. The stele account reveals that in 1374, a supervisor in the branch military commission, Sanggashiri, and general secretary, Wang Yaozhong, surveyed lands at the Prince of Liang's command.[28] This seems to confirm both the continued operation of the branch secretariat, which oversaw the branch military commission, and the Prince of Liang's direct participation in branch secretariat administration.

Better documented but less directly related to daily administration is the retention of the Great Yuan calendar. During the mid-fourteenth century, several men established political regimes in today's China, declaring themselves kings or emperors, announcing dynastic titles, and establishing their own calendars. Beginning in 1351, there were two and often three or four calendars in use at the same time. One way that Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors staked a claim to sovereignty was through proclaiming a new calendar and a new reign period. However in Yunnan, even after 1368, everything from government orders to inscriptions in Buddhist halls marked time by the Yuan calendar. A copy of the *Miraculous Dharma of the Lotus Sutra*, discovered in 1981 during repairs to a stupa in today's Dali, bears the inscription "completed the 25th day of the 2nd month of the 29th year of the Zhizheng reign," that is, 1369. Likewise, a stone stele recording lands donated to Coiled Dragon Abbey (Panlong chan'an) (in Jinning County) is the dated the twenty-ninth year of the Zhizheng reign.[29] Two inscriptions that use Great Khan Ayushiridara's reign name, that is Xuanguang, have been found in and around Dali. One, dated the seventh year of Xuanguang (1377), is from a stele that relates the construction and history of a local monastery, including a detailed list of its landholdings.[30] The second, a funerary inscription for the abbot of Great Brilliance Monastery (Daguangming si), is from the ninth year of Xuanguang (1379).[31] Thus far, a dozen or so objects, including Buddhist sutras, funerary inscriptions, stone stele accounts, and pagoda bricks, inscribed with the Xuanguang reign date have come to light. Another half dozen such examples are preserved in Ming and Qing period gazetteers, although the original objects have been lost.[32]

[28] Huang Derong, "Yunnan faxian," p. 11.
[29] Huang Derong, "Yunnan faxian," pp. 10–12; Zhang Shufang, *Dali congshu jinshi pian*, vol. 1, p. 93.
[30] Sun Taichu, *Yunnan gudai shike*, pp. 107–22.
[31] Zhang Shufang, *Dali congshu jinshi pian*, vol. 1, p. 96.
[32] Huang Derong, "Yunnan faxian," p. 14; Zhang Shufang, *Dali congshu jinshi pian*, vol. 1, pp. 31, 94–95; Funada, "Unnan ni okeru," p. 73.

The Prince of Liang, Vajravarmi, was a descendant of Qubilai who owed his title and some measure of his power to the Great Yuan. As noted, his court maintained Yuan administrative structures, used Yuan titles, and marked time by the Yuan calendar even after Daidu's fall in 1368. Yet, much remains unclear about the relationship between Vajravarmi and the Great Yuan court. Some sources, albeit compiled at later dates, indicate direct links between the Vajravarmi and Yuan courts. Vajravarmi's biography in the *Official History of the Ming Dynasty* shows that the prince continued to send envoys to the Yuan emperor on the steppe. Given the great distances and the expansion of Ming control into Sichuan, such envoys braved considerable danger in making the trip to Qara-Qorum. In fact, several of them were captured by Ming forces and delivered to Zhu Yuanzhang in Nanjing.[33]

To strengthen such tenuous ties, the Great Khan sent his own representatives to Dali. Sometime in 1372, the Great Yuan court dispatched an envoy, Toqto'a, to secure grain and military cooperation from Yunnan.[34] Such a mission parallels similar efforts by the Great Yuan vis-à-vis other allies like the Koryŏ court. At the approximately the same time, a Ming envoy, the Hanlin scholar Wang Wei (1323–74), arrived at Vajravarmi's court to persuade the prince to transfer his allegiance to Zhu Yuanzhang.[35] After the Ming envoy was put under house arrest for several days, he tried intimidation. He recounted that after Toghan-Temür's death, Köke-Temür's followers had either surrendered to the Ming court or fled. Those who surrendered first were rewarded; those who came later were executed. Now the Ming court had eliminated all rivals. Wang Wei warned that should Zhu Yuanzhang dispatch an army of one million troops to Kunming, Vajravarmi would be "like a fish swimming in a pot; his death was assured." According to a seventeenth-century account, Vajravarmi and his ministers, now utterly cowed, were keen to surrender.

Sensing Vajravarmi's wavering allegiance, the Great Yuan envoy Toqto'a decided to bolster the prince's commitment by forcing him to kill the Ming envoy.[36] Not only had he failed to aid the Great Yuan in its moment of greatest need, Toqto'a chasticed Vajravarmi, but he now considered submission to a second ruler. Toqto'a threatened to leap on his horse and leave, presumably to report the prince's perfidy to Ayushiridara. If the prince had initially attempted to shield Wang Wei from harm, now he bowed to Yuan pressure and produced Wang Wei.[37] Given that some of the accounts just cited are tributes to

[33] *MS*, 124.12.3719–20. [34] *MYZSL*, 86.2a–b, pp. 1717–18.
[35] *MTZSL*, 71.1b, p. 1314. On Wang Wei, see A. R. Davis in *DMB*, pp. 1444–47.
[36] *MSJS*, 12.1.116.
[37] He Mengchun, *He wen jian shu yi*, 8.36b–37a (*WYSK*, 429.207). See also Wu Shi, *Yi shan si gao*, 8.19a (*BTGZ*, vol. 102, p. 762); Tang Long (*Yu shi ji*, 2.5b (*SKCM*, *ji* 65, p. 389); *Ming*

Vajravarmi's sense of loyalty, they may overstate his efforts to protect Wang Wei. In any case, the incident suggests the battle for loyalty in the post-1368 period.

Just before his death (either at his own hand or that of Great Yuan envoy, Toqto'a), Wang offered a parting shot. *The Ming Veritable Records* has him proudly declaring, "Heaven has already destroyed your mandate and aided Our Great Ming in unifying the realm."[38] Wang shouted, "How can your sputtering flames compete with the brilliance of the sun and moon!" The "brilliance of the sun and moon" was a weak verbal-visual pun. The Chinese character for the dynastic name "Ming" was composed of two component parts, the characters for "sun" and "moon." Wang warned Vajravarmi, "if in the morning you murder me, by evening the great army [of the Ming dynasty] will be here."[39] In fact, the great army would not arrive for another decade. The intense – even fatal – competition between the Yuan and Ming courts for the Prince of Liang's loyalty is a poignant reminder of the wider struggle for allegiance in eastern Eurasia in the wake of the Mongol empire's collapse.

The Early Ming Court's Chinggisid Narrative in Yunnan

This section traces how Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors applied the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative to conditions in Yunnan. Between 1372 and 1381, Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly sent envoys to negotiate the surrender of the Prince of Liang, the Duan family, the Prince of Luchuan, and other local power holders. A 1372 edict was addressed to both the Prince of Liang and the Duan family. Zhu Yuanzhang wrote:

> We observe that since Heaven has given birth to this people, it has always established a ruler to care for and rule them. In the past, the Yuan ruler failed in governance. All within the seas churned, and its territory was carved like a melon. Brigands seized lands and wantonly killed beyond reckoning. The common people were reduced to extreme misery for ten and seven years. We rose from the ranks of the common people to raise a righteous army and establish a dynasty on the southern bank of the Yangzi River. We ordered the generals to march in all directions. To the west, they pacified the ruler of the Han [dynasty] Chen Youliang; to the east they captured the King of the Wu [dynasty] Zhang Shicheng; to the south they conquered Fujian and Guangzhou; to the north they cleansed You and Yan. Having brought peace to China and restored the former territories of Our China, We were pushed forward by the officials and the people to take the throne as emperor. The title for possessing the realm (i.e. the dynasty) is the

Yingzong shilu, 86.2a–b, pp. 1717–18; Zhang Hong, *Nan yi shu* (*SKCM*, *shi* 255, p. 197; *YSC*, vol. 4, pp. 571–72).

[38] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 86.2b, p. 1718.

[39] *MSJS*, 12.1.116; *MS*, 282.24.7415. Bai and Yin ("Liang Wang Bazalawaermi sanshi kao," p. 69) adopt February 5, 1374 as the date of Wang Wei's death.

Great Ming. We have established the reign period Hongwu. On this occasion, We have dispatched envoys to the outer foreigners to promulgate Our intentions. Wherever the envoys went, none of the chieftains of the Man and Yi failed to declare themselves servants of the throne and submit tribute. Whereas you Batu, Prince of Liang, Administrator Duan Guang, and General Regional Military Command Duan Sheng defend Yunnan. [We] have previously sent envoys to announce my instructions. [We] did not expect that Dai Shou of Shu (a Xia military commander) and other such men, taking advantage of the forbidding passes, would block passage along the roads, with the result that My intentions have not reached your lands. Last year, [We] raised an army to punish their crimes, separately ordering great commanders to lead both cavalry and infantry soldiers as well as naval forces to advance by water and land. They arrived in Chongqing, where Ming Sheng, bound hands behind back as a captive, surrendered. Next they pacified Chengdu, where they took captive Dai Shou. Thereupon they established officials in those provinces and counties. Once the western lands were quelled, We again dispatched envoys to inform you and others. For fear that they have not yet arrived and because Beiping has delivered Su Cheng who claims that he is someone you previously dispatched northward, today I again send them bearing an edict. Although We lack virtue and do not match the sage kings of antiquity in Our China, who caused the foreigners of the four quarters to accept submission in all good faith, We cannot but let all under heaven know [of the establishment of the Great Ming]. Thus this edict is to inform you so that you are apprised of it.[40]

Here, Zhu Yuanzhang omits any mention of the Great Yuan as a foreign invader, a cause of cultural pollution, or the inevitable brevity of "the northern horsemen's fortunes." He focuses squarely on his unstoppable march toward reunification of the realm, which had previously been rent asunder by the Great Yuan's "loss of control." He paints the Prince of Liang, Duan Guang, and Duan Sheng as political outliers who, through the treachery of the Xia regime, have been denied the good news of the Ming dynasty's establishment. In mentioning the envoy "dispatched northward," Zhu Yuanzhang implicitly acknowledges the Prince of Liang's ties to the Great Yuan. However, the Ming founder emphasized the opportunity for cordial relations in the future rather than condemnation of the past. The narrative of irresistible military victory, including triumph over the Xia dynasty, which had previously attacked Yunnan, makes clear why amity with the Ming should be the obvious choice for the Prince of Liang and the Duan family. Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang grants the Prince of Liang superior status. He and the Duan men are all defenders of Yunnan.

In 1374, Zhu Yuanzhang sent another mission. It included a Yuan noble, son of the Weishun Prince.[41] A 1366 entry in *The Ming Veritable Records*

[40] *DMTZ*, 2.22b–23a, vol. 1, pp. 278–79; *MTZSL*, 71.1b–2a, pp. 1314–15.

[41] Serruys (*Mongols in China*, pp. 153–54) suggests that Bobo (also written as Paipai) may be Beg-Temür, one of Könčeg-Buqa's sons who is mentioned in *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*.

notes that he led troops out of Yunnan into Shaanxi that winter,[42] but it is unclear whether the Weishun Prince had any particular tie to Yunnan.

Although the prince's fate in the Yuan-Ming transition is unknown, his family seems to have been among the thousands of members of the Great Yuan court captured at Yingchang in 1370. The Ming throne provided for their material well-being (likely in Nanjing) until it found a use for them. In 1370, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the Ministry of Revenue to increase the monthly rice payment given to the wives and children of the Weishun Prince and several other Mongol nobles.[43] Later the same year, the emperor ordered the Central Secretariat to disburse funds to the families of Maidaribala and the Weishun Prince's consort and other family members to cover the costs of a year's supply of fuel and rice.[44] To increase good will and foster trust, Zhu Yuanzhang's envoy missions routinely included friends, former subordinates, and family members of the leaders with whom he was negotiating. Sometimes it worked (as we saw with Nagachu and Nair-Buqa), and sometimes it did not. The gesture, however, cost Zhu Yuanzhang little.

Zhu Yuanzhang's 1374 message to the Prince of Liang reads.

Obeying Heaven and Receiving Fortune,

The Emperor Commands:

Those who obey Heaven prosper; those who defy Heaven perish. This is a fixed principal of antiquity and today, an enduring principal of fortune and catastrophe.

We rose from among the common people to eliminate the assembled heroes. It has now been seven years since We suppressed chaos and restored order. China is at peace, and the foreigners of the four quarters have joined Us in obedience. There is absolutely no oppression of the weak by the strong or predation upon the few by the many. Those who have declared themselves servants [of the throne] have all been able to preserve their territory and share in the good fortune of peace. Only you, Prince of Liang, Vajravarmi, who was dispatched by the Yuan ruler to receive investiture in the Southwest, have in your isolation and desolation, failed to perceive Heaven's will and have not yet submitted as a servant of the throne. Your misdeeds either will incur disaster on the people of Dali or you are bound to die at the hands of Dali. One of these two calamities will befall you; there is no escape. What do We mean? The lands and people of Yunnan originally belonged to Dali. From the Han dynasty onward, it had relations with China, declaring itself a servant of the throne and presenting tribute at the court. From the Tang and Song dynasties, its rulers received investiture as prince. It was long thus. In the past, because you Yuan extirpated their kings and took control of their lands, for a century, there has thus been no revival of their old ways. Now the fortunes of the Yuan have been completely overturned. You still tenaciously cling to their lands without returning them to Dali. Will the prince deceive the people? Will he deceive Heaven? Although man can be deceived, Heaven cannot be deceived. The moment of

[42] *MTZSL*, 19.6a, p. 269. [43] *MTZSL*, 54.4b–5a, pp. 1066–67. [44] *MTZSL*, 55.3a, p. 1077.

reckoning is nigh. We have now specially dispatched the son of the Weishun Prince, a member of your family, to you with a message. If above you obey Heaven's Principle and below accord with the people's wishes, you will present tribute and come to court. You will be certain to receive in exchange a seal of rule. Your ministers will be certain to receive in exchange seals of office. This will allow you the prince and ministers to enjoy good fortune. Otherwise, We are certain to send other envoys directly to Dali, where according to Tang and Song precedents, he will be made king. We will join armies to punish you. At that time, it will be too late for regret. Alas! It is now abundantly evident that the northern horsemen caitiffs' allotted span of rule lasts not a century. The moment when people's support changes consists in nothing more than men's own calculations. You should not delay. Consider this! Thus, We have promulgated this edict of instruction wishing that you should be fully apprised.[45]

Here Zhu Yuanzhang offers the Prince of Liang two entirely different futures. If he submits to the Ming, he will prosper. He will maintain his lands, his officials, and his status. He will continue to enjoy the support of his officials who will keep their current posts. To show his good faith, Zhu Yuanzhang sends a member of the Chinggisid imperial family who has submitted to the Ming and now enjoys prestige. If Vajravarmi refuses, he will face certain destruction at the hands of the people of Dali. Zhu Yuanzhang works hard to heighten Vajravarmi's sense of vulnerability and isolation. Daidu has fallen, China is united under the Zhu Yuanzhang, and "the foreigners of the four quarters" have all joined the Ming dynasty. Vajravarmi heads a foreign occupation that is losing control. In fact, Zhu Yuanzhang explicitly warns that unless Vajravarmi submits immediately, he will restore the title of Prince of Dali. This will simultaneously increase local support for a direct challenge to Vajravarmi's power in Yunnan and create an avenue for further Ming influence in the region. Zhu Yuanzhang promises a joint Dali-Ming military strike against Vajravarmi. Given the troubled relations between the Prince of Liang and the Duan family, Vajravarmi would have immediately grasped the stakes of a Ming-Dali alliance. Zhu Yuanzhang's attention to the specifics of local power dynamics is augmented by his rhetoric about broader truths such as Heaven's will and foreign rule's short-lived nature.

Zhu Yuanzhang's threat about restoring the Prince of Dali was not idle. At nearly the same time, the emperor sent another mission to the Duan family in Dali. The mission's ostensible purpose was delivery of a gift of brocade made from gold-wrapped thread. The recipient was a Great Yuan official serving in Jianchang, Yunnan, who was conducting his own negotiations with the Ming throne, independent of the Prince of Dali and the Prince of Liang. Ariq held the

[45] *DMTZ*, 2.23b–24a, vol. 1, pp. 280–81; *HMZZ*, 1.55a–56a (*XXSK*, *shi* 45, pp. 561–62). See also *MTZSL*, 92.4b–5a, pp. 1608–9.

post minister of the left, presumably in the Yunnan government.[46] One month earlier, Ariq had sent a representative to submit, although it is unclear whether he traveled to the capital or as seems more likely, to the nearest Ming authorities.[47] The Ming court likely wished to use Ariq as a conduit to the Duan family in Dali. In returning Ariq's representative, the Ming court was demonstrating its good faith. It seems likely that it also hoped that a Great Yuan official might prove effective in negotiating the submission of the Duan family.[48]

The edict they delivered reads:

Obeying Heaven and Receiving Fortune,

The Emperor Commands:

Initially because the Yuan lost control, the realm grew chaotic. The Chinese and foreigners were without a ruler. From the eighth month of the first year of the Hongwu reign (1368), when We pacified all the assembled heroes, restored the fatherland of us the Chinese, and united China under one rule, it has now been seven years. The foreigners of the four quarters have all been in contact [with Us]; there is not one that had not declared itself a servant of the throne and come to the capital with tribute. Only with you in Dali have We not seen a prince's title. [You] have not once sent an envoy. This autumn, only after the chancellors of the Hanlin Academy had exhaustively perused all books did [We] see that Dali of the southwest had in the past received from the Tang and Song dynasties the title of prince. The Yuan abolished the kingdom's name and merely used the term "indigenous officials." Now the kingdom is ruled by the Prince of Liang, who was dispatched by the Yuan ruler. To the present, it has not had [its own] prince. We have met with Our ministers to deliberate on using established precedents of the Tang and Song to invest you the Duan family as the Prince of Dali. Thus, We have specially dispatched envoys to first instruct you of Our intentions. [We] do not know whether [such precedents] are credible. Thus [We] have specially dispatched an official in advance to go and inform you. If you observe Our commands, as soon as the envoy returns, We will send another envoy specifically to deliver seals of office and letters patent, thus permitting you, prince and ministers, to establish a dynasty and join the enjoyment of the good fortune of peace. Otherwise, another day, an army will gather in Yunnan. What might be the results of such a contest? Consider this carefully.[49]

Zhu likewise explains in clear terms the drastically different consequences of the decision confronting the Duan family. An alliance with the Ming dynasty will bring power, status, and security. The alternative will mean

[46] The officials were Zhao Yuanyou, Zhang Jin, and Shadecheng. In a Muslim context, Ariq would be read as Ali.
[47] *MTZSL*, 91.5a, p. 1599. This transcription follows Christopher Atwood's suggestion.
[48] *MTZSL*, 92.7b–8a, pp. 1614–15.
[49] *DMTZ*, 2.26a–b, vol. 1, pp. 285–86; *HMZZ*, 1.54a–b (*XXSK*, *shi* 45, p. 561). See also *MTZSL*, 92.7b–8a, pp. 1614–15.

the arrival of the Ming army. Central to Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts to win the Duan family's allegiance is his depiction of the Great Yuan as a foreign conqueror that effaced Dali's political identity. Qubilai abolished Dali as a kingdom and reduced its ruling elite to nothing more than indigenous officials, the Ming emperor argued. Given that the Duan lineage had held power in Dali since the tenth century, Zhu Yuanzhang is no doubt appealing to family pride and sense of resentment. Vajravarmi is portrayed as holding power through the dictates of a foreign and distant Great Yuan court rather than through local roots or support. Zhu Yuanzhang stresses how thoroughly the Great Yuan had erased all memory of Dali's status as a kingdom and, implicitly, the Duan family's standing as a ruling house. Only after assiduously combing historical records did Zhu Yuanzhang's officials uncover the truth of the matter. Now Zhu Yuanzhang offers restoration of the proper order by offering seals of office and letters patent. Left unsaid in this communication, but likely assumed, was an offer of military assistance against a common enemy, Vajravarmi. Restoration and vindication are within reach, the emperor insinuates, if only the Duan family offers its allegiance to the Ming dynasty.

Finally, here and elsewhere, Zhu Yuanzhang and his officials describe Yunnan as outside China. The emperor's claim that he "united China under one rule" in 1368 can be true only if Yunnan were not part of China.[50] In this edict, Zhu Yuanzhang includes the Duan family in Dali as one of "the foreigners of the four quarters."

One member of the Duan family, Duan Bao, considered offering his allegiance to Zhu Yuanzhang. In 1365 on the heels of his father's murder at the Prince of Liang's hand, Duan Bao had unilaterally declared himself Administrator (*pingzhang*) of Dali. He later cooperated with the Prince of Liang against a common foe in Yunnan. Now in 1374, he sent a petition of submission to Zhu Yuanzhang in which he expressed many of the things that the Ming founder wished to hear – that Zhu Yuanzhang obeyed Heaven and succeeded to fortune, that he was heir to the succession of legitimate dynasties dating back to the ancient sage-kings Yao and Shun, and that the Obedient Emperor (that is, Toghan-Temür) had fled to the north and the Prince of Liang remained a blight in Yunnan. At the same time, however, Duan Bao drew on historical precedents from the Han, Tang, and Yuan dynasties to support his proposal for substantial local autonomy.[51] There is no evidence that Duan Bao

[50] As noted, during his mission to Yunnan, Wang Wei had insisted that the Great Ming had unified the realm.

[51] *Zengding Nanzhao yeshi*, xia, 1.

ever submitted to the Ming court.[52] Perhaps negotiations sputtered out. In fact, the Duan family took pride in its 130 years of loyal service to the Great Yuan, as we will see shortly.

In 1375, the Ming court sent yet another mission, which again ended in the principal envoy's death. The emperor instructed a senior official in the Huguang provincial government, Wu Yun, to persuade the Prince of Liang to surrender. Prior to this, the Prince of Liang had dispatched a twenty-man mission to the Yuan court on the steppe to report on developments in Yunnan. The mission had passed through territory allied with the Great Yuan that lay west of the Ming dynasty's control. It visited the Prince of Anding near today's Hami.[53] As the crow flies, it is nearly 1,400 miles (2,225 km) from Kunming to Hami, a highway journey today of about thirty-five hours. However, at some point (presumably near the steppe), Ming authorities learned of the mission. They sent a military unit to intercept the Prince of Liang's envoys, who were delivered to Zhu Yuanzhang's court in Nanjing. In an effort to garner good will, the emperor decided to return the captured personnel to the Prince of Liang. Wu Yun was to travel with them. As they approached Yunnan, the Prince of Liang's men grew increasingly concerned about what sort of reception might await them. Since they had failed to complete their mission, they concluded, the prince was certain to punish them, perhaps with death. They tried to persuade Wu Yun to don Mongolian garb, braid his hair in the Mongolian fashion, and claim that he was an envoy from the Great Yuan court. They also wanted him to forge an imperial edict to present to the prince. Wu Yun, refused, saying he would rather die. The prince's envoys killed him.[54] Perhaps we should dismiss the abortive plan as the result of panicked desperation. Yet, it is striking that the prince's men believed that a change of clothes and hairstyle was sufficient to transform a Great Ming envoy into a Great Yuan envoy. More telling still is that the Yuan court on the steppe would send an imperial edict written in Chinese to the Prince of Yunnan. All this suggests a high level of commensurability between the Great Ming and Great Yuan courts during these years.

The Ming conquest of Yunnan required a massive military effort.[55] In August 1381, Zhu Yuanzhang summoned senior civil and military personnel

[52] *Official History of the Ming Dynasty* includes Zhu Yuanzhang's explanation for his "generous" treatment of Duan Shi, who had been brought to court as a prisoner. "Your father [Duan] Bao once had a petition of submission, and We cannot bear to extinguish [your family line]." See *MS*, 313.27.8068. There is no corroborating evidence that (a) Duan Bao considered the communication with the Ming throne a petition of submission or (b) the communication led to his actual surrender.

[53] *JSLJZ*, p. 394. [54] *MTZSL*, 101.1b–2a, pp. 1706–7.

[55] Langlois, "Hung-wu," pp. 144–46. Winning support of native officials in Guizhou and elsewhere was essential for the creation of relay stations to Yunnan. More than nearly 100 relay stations were built in Guizhou, Huguang, and Sichuan. See Harris, "Into the Frontier," pp. 7–8.

to announce the campaign's rationale. He reminded them that since the time of the Han dynasty, Yunnan had been "a minister subordinate to China." However, now the "remnant bastard" Vajravarmi, relying on Yunnan's great distance, not only refused to recognize the Great Ming, he also murdered its envoys. Zhu Yuanzhang ordered his military commanders to intensify drill, and in addition he distributed rewards of textiles and cash to nearly 250,000 men.[56] One month later, the emperor met with his senior military commanders, including Fu Youde, Lan Yu, and Mu Ying, to address the difficulties of a campaign to a far-flung, mountainous region. He also outlined the overarching strategy.[57] At the same time, he dispatched envoys to contact indigenous leaders in Bozhou and Jinzhu. In his communication to the Bozhou leader, Zhu Yuanzhang rehearsed his miraculous rise out of the chaos created by the collapse of Yuan dynastic governance. He then requested 2,000 horses and 20,000 troops from Bozhou to join the Ming dynastic campaign again Vajravarmi. In another communication, Zhu Yuanzhang acknowledged that Jinzhu had duly recognized the Great Ming, but now it must contribute 500 horses for the Yunnan campaign.[58] Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang's first steps for the campaign included justifying war, winning support at home, drafting a strategy, and enlisting local leaders' active support in the form of horses and military labor.

Fighting began early in January 1382. Ming imperial chronicles indicate that Ming armies quickly overwhelmed Vajravarmi's general, Darma. "Several tens of thousands" of Darma's soldiers surrendered to Ming commanders after early clashes on January 2. They were demobilized rather than incorporated into the Ming imperial military.[59] On January 4, Vajravarmi withdrew to Mt. Luozuo.[60] Palace eunuchs shuttled back and forth between the battlefront and Nanjing. Zhu Yuanzhang worried that his army was advancing so quickly that it would have insufficient grain supplies to feed itself. At one point, he ordered Fu Youde and others to withdraw, only to receive news that the army had secured enough food.[61] As the imperial army marched deeper into Yunnan, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched envoys to local leaders in places like Wumeng and Wusan. Again he stressed that the people of the southwest had always offered tribute to China and that Zhu Yuanzhang now possessed Heaven's Mandate. If they did not submit now, he warned, they would regret it later.[62]

Having received reports that the military situation was critical, on January 6, Vajravarmi, his family, and a few senior officials abandoned Mt. Luozuo and traveled to a spot immediately south of Dianchi Lake, a large, freshwater lake, just west of today's Kunming.[63] Ming imperial records relate that Vajravarmi

[56] *MTZSL*, 138.5a–b, pp. 2179–80.
[57] *MTZSL*, 139.1a, p. 2185.
[58] *MTZSL*, 139.1b, p. 2186.
[59] *MTZSL*, 140.6a–b, pp. 2211–12.
[60] *MTZSL*, 140.6b, p. 2212.
[61] *MTZSL*, 140.6b–7a, pp. 2212–13.
[62] *MTZSL*, 140.7a, p. 2213.
[63] He traveled to Huna Cliff in nearby Puningzhou.

decided the situation was hopeless. First, he burned his dragon robes, a symbol of his status as ruler. Then, rather than let them be captured and humiliated by Ming troops, he drowned his wife and children in Dianchi Lake. Vajravarmi's final act was to hang himself in a humble thatched shed.[64] Despite tensions with the Prince of Liang, Duan Shi stubbornly defended Dali until he was captured in battle by Ming forces.[65]

After Vajravarmi's suicide but before the Ming army's arrival in Dali, Duan Shi wrote three letters to the Ming senior commander in Yunnan, Fu Youde.[66] They provide a rare glimpse into how contemporaries responded to the Ming court's military expansion and its Chinggisid narrative. First, let us examine what Duan Shi had to say about the Mongols. Duan situated the Great Yuan in a long line of Chinese dynasties that failed to impose rule on Yunnan. Yunnan had "resisted the Zhao family's Song dynasty for 315 years," he observed. Things changed with the Mongols' arrival.

> It happened that the Yuan dynasty was in the ascendant. On the principle of the small serving the great, [we] were the first to submit and join. [The Yuan dynasty] specially appointed our Grand Progenitor as the Duke of Wuding,[67] who as before, continued to govern the prefectural cities of Dali, Shanchan, Huichuan,[68] Jianchang, Weichu, Yaoan, Eqing, Dongchang and other such places as well as thirty-six local chieftains, which were all subject to our control.[69] We took care of those who surrendered in obedience and alternately offered the chance to submit or punished those who refused to acknowledge the court. After more than a decade, the people's minds were eventually settled. Later, [the Yuan] established a branch secretariat and created administrative offices among all the routes. For generations, our forefathers enjoyed favor and held posts. We have protected this land for 130 years now. Loyalty and filial piety have been passed down generation after generation with unswerving devotion.[70]

In Duan Shi's account, Yunnan came under Mongol rule not by conquest but instead because of the Duan family's principled decision to join the Great Yuan. Recognizing that choice, the Great Yuan confirmed the Duan family's

[64] *MTZSL*, 140.7a, p. 2213.

[65] *MTZSL*, 143.2b–3a, pp. 2246–67. He was transported along with 160 Yuan officials from Yunnan to Nanjing. Duan Shi eventually was appointed to serve in the bodyguard of Zhu Yuanzhang's son, the Prince of Qi, along the northern border. See *MTZSL*, 152.4a, p. 2389; 161.1a, p. 2489. Duan Shi was the younger brother of Duan Bao, who had submitted to the Ming throne in 1374.

[66] The letters are included in *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1624–30. For their contents, see Du Yuting, "Shilun *Dali zhanshu*"; "Dali zhanshu."

[67] *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* does not mention any member of the Duan family receiving such a title.

[68] The text here is corrupt. The passage should read Dali, Shanchan, Huichuan. Fang Guoyu ("Dali zhanshu," *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 549) reaches the same conclusion.

[69] The Yuan state placed "thirty-seven lineages" (*sanshiqi bu*) under the jurisdiction of three administrative units called "routes." *YS*, 7.1.135.

[70] *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1625–25. Quotation appears on p. 1625.

control over broad lands and numerous subject populations. The Duan family proved capable and devoted servants of the throne for generations.[71] Duan Shi offers a vision of a promising future with the Ming court based on the family's relation with the Great Yuan – respect and local autonomy in return for devoted, stable, and capable service.

Duan Shi addresses the decline of Yuan rule, both in Yunnan in particular and in the realm more generally, to highlight the family's exemplary service. More importantly, it signals his openness to new opportunities. He notes that when Red Turban forces (referring to the armies of the Xia dynasty) seized Kunming, his brother heroically came to the rescue, restoring control of the city. He observes that "evil ministers" misled the Prince of Liang, which had resulted in years of unnecessary military strife. His family would have appealed to their lord, the Great Khan, but "it happened that the time, the Yuan ruler had lost the throne." Thus "there was no way to seek redress."[72] In other words, the Duan family had not abandoned their sovereign; instead it was their lord who had forsaken them through his loss of power. Only then did the Duan family send envoys to the Ming court offering their submission. The envoys, however, had been detained in Yunnan, presumably by Vajravarmi loyalists. Due to Zhu Yuanzhang's "heavenly intelligence," Ming envoys arrived in Dali where they offered promises to invest Duan Shi as the Prince of Yunnan. Duan Shi now wished to confirm that the Ming court intended to keep its word. He asked Fu Youde to relay his intentions to Zhu Yuanzhang.

Fu Youde answered in a letter. His response in the midst of a large-scale military campaign shows that rhetoric and political claims mattered. Fu Youde draws on the Ming court's standard narrative of Toghan-Temür's signal failure as ruler, the resultant suffering among the people, the realm's descent into war, the rise of rebel regimes, loss of territorial integrity, Heaven's turn against the Yuan, and Zhu Yuanzhang's astounding success. He then addresses Yunnan. Fu Youde neither treats Yunnan as Yuan territory nor does he call the Prince of Liang a member of the Chinggisid ruling house. Instead, he refers to the inconstancy of "southern barbarians" and their lack of good faith. He describes the Prince of Liang's commanding general as "Yunnan's Darma" rather than a Yuan general. Fu Youde responds to Duan Shi's claims about family service. Fu writes,

[71] In 1281, Duan Xin and his son, Aqing, traveled to the court for an audience with Qubilai. Pleased with the Duan family's service, Qubilai granted Duan Xin a series of promotions and retained Aqing as a member of the heir apparent's personal guard. See *YS*, 166.13.3910. In time, Aqing succeeded to his father's posts. He was further allowed to bear a golden tiger tablet of authority. See *YS*, 166.13.3910.

[72] *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1625.

When Qubilai campaigned to the south, Duan Xingzhi and Duan Fuxiang submitted and joined [the Mongols] with whole cities,[73] and they led barbarian bands to accompany the army to attack the Song. Further, your forefather, Duan Shi succeeded to their posts and continued to render meritorious service; he received promotion to the rank of assistant grand councilor. That this was passed on among his descendants without interruption to the present is to have been an illustrious family.[74]

Here Fu Youde acknowledges Duan Shi's claims about generations of loyal service to the Yuan. However, he rejects Duan's explanation of his actions. Duan Shi, Fu insists, had stumbled at a critical time. He failed to either assist Darma or submit to the Ming. Duan had forfeited the opportunity to become Prince of Dali; the offer was no longer valid in the wake of Vajravarmi's defeat. "If at that time, you had been able to send troops in assistance to jointly destroy Yunnan and further establish meritorious service with singular devotion to the imperial house, the previous promise would have fulfilled."[75] Fu Youde reminds Duan Shi that the Ming military had completely overwhelmed the Mongols to the north and Japanese to the south. Yunnan presents no difficulty. Fu announces in clear terms the Ming dynasty's intention to establish administrative offices in all cities that submit, to garrison troops throughout the region, and to increase agricultural colonies. This, Fu explains, "is a plan for [Ming rule] that will not be uprooted for ten thousand generations."[76]

Days after Vajravarmi's suicide, one of his palace eunuchs presented the prince's golden seal to the Ming commanders, Lan Yu and Mu Ying.[77] Ming authorities "secured the golden seal of the Prince of Liang as well as instruments of authorization, maps and registration rolls."[78] Ming writers took pains to note the seizure of "74 gold, silver, and bronze seals."[79] The Ming court prized these symbols of sovereignty as evidence of its success against the Great Yuan court. Having defeated Prince Vajravarmi's forces, the Ming state almost immediately began to establish military garrisons, which built walled fortifications, established farming colonies, and supervised irrigation projects.[80] The administrative expansion is reflected in the scores of small brass seals held by different offices in Ming military garrisons in Dali and its environs. More than a dozen examples survive from 1383 and 1384 alone.[81]

[73] Or "to preserve the cities' residents" or "keep the cities intact." [74] *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1626.
[75] *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1627.
[76] *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1627. Duan Shi's remaining two letters say little about Yuan rule or the Chinggisids. Rather, he makes the case why the Ming court should not garrison troops or establish a lasting administrative presence in Yunnan, with its foreign culture, deadly diseases, inhospitable climate, and truculent, deadly tribesmen. The better alternative, he argues, is to yield local rule to the Duan family, which as loyal subordinate will keep the border secure and present regular tribute to the throne.
[77] *MTZSL*, 140.7b, p. 2214. The eunuch was Esen-Temür. [78] *GCDG*, 43.2.1051.
[79] He Mengchun, "Ci si shu"; *He wen jian shu yi*, 8.37b (*WYSK*, 429.207).
[80] Dai Hui, "Mingdai Daliwei," pp. 57–59. [81] Yang Yiqing, "Yunnan Dali faxian."

Establishing the Ming state in Yunnan also involved care of those who had sacrificed their lives in its acquisition. In 1383, the senior Ming general, Fu Youde, erected a stele commemorating a Buddhist service to ensure the smooth passage into paradise of the souls of imperial troops that fell in battle during the suppression of local resistance.[82]

The Ming court was also careful to round up another emblem of Chinggisid power, Vajravarmi's surviving family members and senior officials. These included the son of the Weishun Prince who had been sent by the Ming court to Vajravarmi as an envoy in 1374 and had apparently remained there. More than 300 family members were transported to the capital in Nanjing.[83] The very next month, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched them to Tamma Island (today's Cheju Island) located off the southern coast of the Korean peninsula.[84] In 1384, the Zhu Yuanzhang relocated the households of seven officials who had served the Prince of Liang, this time to Tongzhou (a little less than 200 miles/300 km downstream along the Yangzi River from Nanjing).[85] A decade after annexing Yunnan, the Ming emperor remained worried that the Prince of Liang's descendants might still pose a threat. In 1392, Zhu Yuanzhang exiled the grandson of the Prince of Liang, Aiyan-Temür, to Tamma Island where he would join relatives.[86]

Post-Conquest

Following the Ming dynasty's defeat of the Prince of Liang, Zhu Yuanzhang issued a series of announcements. All begin with a brief description of his rise, usually referring to the collapse of order resulting from poor Yuan governance. They then explain why he had no choice but to wage war in Yunnan. The Chinggisids figure only minimally in these edicts.

After initial conquest of Yunnan, in 1382, Zhu Yuanzhang issued the following edict to the "people of Wumeng, Wusan, Dongchuan, and other such places."

> In the past, the governance of the Yuan dynasty lacked vigor, and heroes ran untrammeled. We raised an army and drove them all out after ten and two years. Later, We ordered commanders to campaign in all directions. After five years, the realm was settled and the myriad surnames were at peace. It has now been another fifteen years since the dynasty's establishment. Among Chinese and barbarians there was none that

[82] See Zhang Shufang, *Dali congshu jinshi pian*, vol. 1, p. 99. Buddha's Light Fort (Foguangzhai) was the site of at least two such insurrections in the years immediately following Vajravarmi's death. See Yang Shen, *Dian zai ji*, 18b (*Lidai biji xiaoshuo jicheng*, vol. 49, p. 368). These campaigns also served as a vehicle through which to win local leaders' allegiance.
[83] *MTZSL*, 143.8a, p. 2257.
[84] *MTZSL*, 144.2a, p. 2263; *GQ*, 7.1.618; *KS*, 134.10.4052; *KSCY*, 31.38a–b, p. 790.
[85] *MTZSL*, 162.1b, p. 2512.
[86] *MTZSL*, 215.2a, p. 3171; *KS*, 46.4.1403.

did not submit to the throne. Only you barbarians of the Wusan, Wumeng, Dongchuan, Mangbu, and Jianchang defied our commands and did not come to court. Yunnan's Prince of Liang was especially out of control. He lured Our fugitives and harassed Our borders. For these reasons, We ordered General-to-Quell-the-South, the Marquis of Yingchuan, Fu Youde; Vice-General of the Left, the Marquis of Yongchang, Lan Yu; Vice-General of the Right, the Marquis of Xiping, Mu Ying to lead 300,000 men to punish the southwestern barbarians' crimes. Now We have received the victory report, which says that Yunnan's lineages have already submitted. Thus, We have specially sent envoys to deliver an imperial edict of instruction: From this day forward, if there are those among you barbarians who do not follow transformation through teaching, We will punish them with military force. Alas! The meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Chronicles* is that there is no greater crime than defying the ruler's commanders and harboring fugitives. If you cleansed your heart and purified your thoughts and exhibited loyalty to the Central State, We would of course treat all with equal benevolence; could there be any differentiation?[87]

Shortly later, Zhu Yuanzhang issued more edicts.[88]

In communications to other regions under Chinggisid rule, Zhu Yuanzhang frequently referred to the fallen remnants of the Yuan who had failed to acknowledge his rule. Here, however, he omits mention of any connection between Yunnan's people and the Yuan court. Instead he highlights their identity as southwestern foreigners. Zhu Yuanzhang explains his turn to arms as a result the collapse of Yuan governance and blames Yunnan's failure to recognize Ming rule on the Prince of Liang. Otherwise he has little to say about the Mongols. Instead, he turns to the language of Our China and the southwestern barbarians. The seventeen measures that follow the edict pass silently over a century of Mongol rule. They focus on the demilitarization of Yunnan through a prohibition on weapons such as bows and arrows, crossbows, and spears, a ban on the production of poisons, and defusing local vendettas. Zhu Yuanzhang's edicts suggest that he no longer found the legacy of Mongol rule useful. Effective Ming governance in Yunnan would rely on institution-building efforts such as establishing schools, creating welfare offices, distributing aid to widows, orphans, and others incapable of supporting themselves, ensuring security for imperial highways and relay stations, and recruiting local men of talent.

The Ming emperor grants a prominent place in governance to local hereditary leaders in exchange for their cooperation in maintaining order.[89] In a 1388

[87] *MTZSL*, 141.5a–b, pp. 2227–28; *DMTZ*, 2.24b–25a, vol. 1, pp. 282–83 for slightly different wording.

[88] *DMTZ*, 2.25b–26a, vol. 1, pp. 284–85; *HMZZ*, 1.99a–b (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 582); *HMZL*, 2.26b (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 61); *MTZSL*, 142.1b–2a, pp. 2232–33. See also *DMTZ*, 2.25a–b, vol. 2, pp. 283–84; *YNJW*, 6a–8b (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, pp. 272–73; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 559); *HMZZ*, 1.100a–b (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 585).

[89] *YNJW*, 6b–8b (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, pp. 272–73; *YSC*, vol. 4, pp. 558–59).

edict, Zhu Yuanzhang struck a similar note. The Mongols had ordered the Prince of Liang, who was a complete outsider, to oversee Yunnan on a hereditary basis. In contrast, Zhu Yuanzhang now gave power over local populations to any chieftain who reported to the Ming court.[90] In the undated letter of appointment to the Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan, Pingmian, and Cheli, Zhu Yuanzhang begins with "Heaven changed the Yuan's fortunes, and We unified the Chinese and foreigners."[91] The remainder of the text discusses the need for local hereditary rule in the region. This was an acknowledgement of Luchuan's power. In 1382, the Ming state had established Jinchi Garrison, which was to serve as a local node of Ming power in the area claimed by Luchuan. Luchuan played an important role in organizing fierce armed resistance against Ming rule that resulted in Jinchi's garrison's temporary abolition. Only in 1385, after two years of negotiations, which involved greater recognition of Luchuan's locally dominant status, did the Ming dynasty manage to reestablish Jinchi garrison. Reconciliation involved Luchuan submitting gifts to the Ming throne; Luchuan also presented a seal of office previously issued by the Yuan government.[92]

Later in his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang occasionally referred to the Prince of Liang but only infrequently spoke of the Great Yuan. In 1392, he castigated the Prince of Luchuan for following the poor example of Vajravarmi. The Prince of Liang had "failed to follow the Heavenly Way and without justification fomented incidents, luring people from Our border regions, giving refuge to criminals, deceiving and misleading the foolish into taking up arms in rebellion, which spread to good and blameless subjects." "Though the land is distant and though the people are beyond the pale of civilization," lamented Zhu Yuanzhang, "there was no choice but to punish them." Unless the Prince of Luchuan changed his ways, he too would face the full might of the Ming military.[93]

In 1396, just two years before his death, Zhu Yuanzhang explained how Yunnan had become part of the Ming polity.

> The barbarians of the four quarters surrounding the Central State and the lands of local chieftains abut each other, but We have never relied on superior strength to invade them or eradicate their successors. That We now possess the lands of Yunnan may seem as if they were gained through reliance on strength. This is incorrect. Instead, the grandson of Yuan Shizu (Qubilai Khan), the Prince of Liang, took advantage of being the descendant of the Yuan to give refuge to Our subjects with crimes and to accept Our fugitives. He tempted those who defended our borders. Thus We had no choice and

[90] *YNJW*, 22b (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, p. 280; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 566).
[91] *DMTZ*, 8.25a, vol. 2, p. 335.
[92] Bi Aonan, "Hongwu nianjian," 102–7.
[93] *MTZS*L, 198.2a, pp. 2969–70; Bi Aonan, "Hongwu nianjian," pp. 107–10.

raised army to punish him. It was not groundless. Further, Heaven had shifted the Yuan's fortunes. It was not right for its descendants to reside there.[94]

Zhu Yuanzhang had always been sensitive about his seizure of power from the Yuan ruling house. Here he again denies that the conquest of Yunnan was simple military expansion. He reminds his audience that the Prince of Liang had misbehaved as a ruler. Moreover, the emperor reiterates a central element of his Chinggisid narrative: Heaven had ended Yuan rule. Zhu Yuanzhang implicitly acknowledges that the Prince of Liang enjoyed sufficient residual power and legitimacy as a member of the Chinggisid family to attract refugees from the Ming dynasty and attack Ming borders. However, given the Yuan ruling house's fall, the prince had no right to retain control of Yunnan. The Ming court had argued this logic for decades. Once the Yuan ruling house abandoned the Central Plains, it forfeited its status as a legitimate dynasty. Its lost any claim on the allegiance of subjects in China.

Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang's silences also merit comment. He presumably was familiar with Qubilai's conquest of Yunnan, which involved not just major political centers such as Dali and today's Kunming but also places like Jinchi.[95] In correspondences with Korean and Japanese authorities, Zhu Yuanzhang frequently referred to the massive destructions caused by Mongol campaigns in their lands and the might of Mongol armies. Yet, in surviving communications with leaders in Dali and Luchuan, Zhu Yuanzhang did not invoke such historical memories. We can only speculate about the motive behind such an omission. However, it serves as a reminder that the early Ming court used its Chinggisid narrative strategically, highlighting certain elements and passing silently over others.

[94] *MTZSL*, 244.2b–4a, pp. 3540–43. See also *DMTZ*, 6.30a–31a, vol. 2, pp. 121–23; *YNJW*, 6a (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, p. 272; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 558); *YNJW*, 17b (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, p. 277; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 564); *YNJW*, 22b (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, p. 280; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 566); *YNJW*, 13a (*SKCM*, *shi* 45, p. 275; *YSC*, vol. 4, p. 558).

[95] The chapter on Burma contained in *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* refers explicitly to Mongol military operations in Dali and Jinchi. For annotation of the account of the Burma campaign found in the Yuan period *Jing shi da dian*, which served as the basis of the *Official History* account, see Lin Chaomin, "*Yuanchao zhengMian*."

9 The Chinggisid Fold

Introduction

This chapter examines Zhu Yuanzhang's correspondence with what we might call the Chinggisid fold. It consists of two groups. The first includes Great Yuan military commanders and their subordinate populations that were located on the Ming dynasty's northeast, northern, northwestern, western, and southwestern borders. The second group consists of the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia. What the two groups shared was a close identification with the Chinggisid imperial enterprise. Commanders such as Naghachu were Mongolian nobles who had received titles from the Great Khan and, after 1368, continued to fight in his name against the Ming dynasty. The Moghul khanate's political elite understood themselves as direct heirs to the Mongol empire, especially the mantle of Chinghis Khan's son Chaghadai. As Chapter 1 showed, memory of Chinggis Khan and the institutional arrangements of the Mongol empire (including hereditary relations of leadership) were defining elements of both the Moghul and Timurid polities.

Despite the similarities sketched in the previous paragraph, important differences distinguished Great Yuan commanders from the Timurid and Moghul elites. Although they all might agree about Chinggis' unique charisma and glory, they told divergent stories about who best preserved his memory, for instance, the Chaghadaid or Toluid House. Political, religious, and cultural preferences also differed, largely as a result of interaction with local traditions in East and Central Asia. Finally, because of physical proximity and geopolitical relevance, the early Ming court was more concerned and better informed about Great Yuan commanders on its immediate borders. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors had never known a time when they were not rivals or allies. More distant, the Moghuls and Timurids shared fewer direct political, economic, military, and personnel ties to the early Ming court. Although Zhu Yuanzhang recognized them as features of a shared Chinggisid landscape, the Moghul and Timurid courts were seldom his highest priority. As a result we have considerably more materials to reconstruct the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative

with the Great Yuan commanders than are available for Zhu Yuanzhang's interactions with the Timurid and Moghul courts.

Great Yuan Commanders

Beginning no later than 1355, Zhu Yuanzhang had been in periodic contact with Great Yuan elites. He often encountered them in their capacity as regional commanders who were acquiring increasing levels of local autonomy. The most powerful were men like Köke-Temür and Naghachu, but there were scores of other important, if less well documented, commanders. In his communications, Zhu Yuanzhang pursued two closely related goals, securing their recognition and their allegiance. As men of influence, their views mattered not only to their subordinate populations, which often numbered in the tens of thousands, but also to other leaders who carefully weighed questions of allegiance in a rapidly shifting political landscape. The following section examines the ways Zhu Yuanzhang addressed three key issues in his effort to sway Great Yuan commanders to his point of view: the futility of further resistance, the limitations of loyalty, and the need to understand one's self-interest.

The Futility of Resistance

Zhu Yuanzhang made the case for the futility of further resistance by highlighting developments in the political, military, and spiritual or cosmic realms. Zhu Yuanzhang regularly pointed to changes in political behavior as evidence that the Great Yuan had lost its legitimacy and viability. Perhaps his most common example was the refrain that kingdoms that formerly recognized the Great Yuan now sent envoys to Nanjing, where they presented tribute to the throne and "declared themselves ministers," that is, they accepted a subordinate status vis-à-vis the Ming emperor who was now their lord. This form of political rhetoric and diplomatic practice predated both the Yuan and Ming dynasties by centuries. For today's scholars, the new and novel confer special significance, but for contemporaries, historical depth of tradition enhanced prestige and resonance. The Ming court claimed that foreign courts' envoys and gifts were iron-clad proof that they recognized the whole raft of the Ming dynasty's claims – from exclusive possession of Heaven's Mandate, popular support, and superior virtue to military dominance and individual emperors' unique qualifications to rule.[1] The inverse was nearly as vital. Cessation of such relations was tantamount to rejection of all such claims. Thus, when Zhu

[1] The subordination of neighboring peoples was regularly celebrated through music and dance at banquets hosted by Ming court. See *MTZSL*, 56.9a–11b, pp. 1103–8.

Yuanzhang wrote to Naghachu, members of the Yuan imperial family and their subordinates, the people of Liaoyang, or the Prince of Liang that envoys from Annam, Koryŏ, Champa, Java, Yunnan, Liuzhao, India's western coast, and others presented tribute at his court, he did not have to say that all these polities had formerly done so at Daidu.[2] Nor did he have to declare that such a change demonstrated the Great Yuan's collapse. The futility of supporting an obviously failed regime was obvious to all. To make crystal clear the most pertinent historical parallel, Zhu Yuanzhang related on occasion that in the past the Great Yuan had similarly won recognition from polities near and far, many of which had abandoned the bankrupt Song ruling house.[3]

As someone who had spent much of his life in armies, first as a soldier, then an officer, and finally as supreme commander, Zhu Yuanzhang had a lively appreciation for the importance of military exigencies. One way he tried to convince Great Yuan commanders to join him was by arguing that further resistance was militarily untenable. Yuan forces had proven incompetent, and Ming armies were now irresistible. With the Great Yuan's collapse, individual commanders' troops were certain to scatter or mutiny. In a 1370 communication to Naghachu, Zhu Yuanzhang writes of Ming armies' overwhelming momentum as they marched west and the nearly uncontainable enthusiasm of his maritime forces for a strike against Liaodong.[4] In another letter to Naghachu, he contrasts the Yuan military's complete inability to suppress rebellion, even when it commanded all the realm's resources, with his quick and complete victory over the warlords. "When the great mansion collapses," the Ming emperor observes, "it cannot be held up by a lone piece of lumber."[5] He counsels Naghachu to surrender as he cannot single-handedly revive the Great Yuan. Zhu Yuanzhang dismisses the forces of Yaozhu and Nair-Buqa, Great Yuan commanders, as "a band of remnant survivors on the steppe with nowhere to go."[6] He predicts that Köke-Temür and later Li Siqi would face nearly certain mutiny in the ranks if they continued to resist the Ming.[7] Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly details the specific military vulnerabilities of individual Great Yuan commanders.[8]

[2] *DMTZ*, 2.4a, vol. 1, p. 241; *MTZSL*, 52.10b, p. 1030; *DMTZ*, 2.5a, vol. 1, p. 243; *MTZSL*, 53.8a, p. 1047; *DMTZ*, 2.32a–b, vol. 1, pp. 294–95; *MTZSL*, 56.7b, p. 1100; *DMTZ*, 2.22a, vol. 1, p. 277; *MTZSL*, 71.1b, p. 1314; *DMTZ*, 2.23a, vol. 1, p. 279; *MTZSL*, 92.4b, p. 1608.

[3] *DMTZ*, 6.32a, vol. 2, p. 65; *DMTZ*, 6.3a, vol. 2, p. 67; *MTZSL*, 198.6a–b, pp. 2977–78. See also *DMTZ*, 7.14b, vol. 2, p. 182.

[4] *DMTZ*, 2.4a, vol. 1, p. 241; *MTZSL*, 52.10b, p. 1030.

[5] *DMTZ*, 7.27b–28b, vol. 2, pp. 268–70; *MTZSL*, 66.8a–9a, pp. 1249–51. The quotation about the falling mansion appears on page 66.9a, p. 1251.

[6] *DMTZ*, 6.4a, vol. 2, p. 69; *MTZSL*, 199.5b, p. 2990.

[7] *DMTZ*, 7.50a, vol. 2, p. 253; *MTZSL*, 25.8b, p. 376. *DMTZ*, 7.25b–26a, vol. 2, pp. 204–5; *MTZSL*, 41.4b, p. 822.

[8] *DMTZ*, 7.47b, vol. 2, p. 246; *DMTZ*, 7.29a–b, vol. 2, pp. 211–12.

The final leg of Zhu Yuanzhang's tripod of futility was the most sweeping and most decisive. The Great Yuan's collapse is entirely Heaven's will. As he writes in a 1370 communication to members of the Yuan ruling house and its subordinates, Heaven creates sages to rule the realm.[9] Just as Heaven creates rulers, it also removes their mandate, Zhu Yuanzhang observes in a message to Naghachu earlier the same year.[10] Heaven's abolition of the Yuan dynasty's mandate explained the realm's collapse into chaos. He similarly identifies "the moment when Great Heaven changed fortune/fate" as the historical context in which Lüer struggled valiantly but ultimately hopelessly to maintain his loyalty to the Great Yuan house.[11] He insists that recent developments were the product of Fortune or Heaven's Fortune and not human effort.[12] A variation of this theme is that the fortunes of the "northern horsemen" are destined to be brief.[13] Their time had simply elapsed. Ayushiridara's flight from Yingchang in 1370 into the steppe demonstrated that even the senior most members of the Yuan ruling house recognized that they had lost Heaven's Mandate, Zhu Yuanzhang claims.[14] Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang explains things with the expression "The Heavenly Way favors reckoning."[15] The Yuan ruling house would reap what it sowed.

In this way, Zhu Yuanzhang attempts to establish that no one could save the Great Yuan. Whether considered in political, military, and cosmic terms, a Yuan revival was hopeless. Great Yuan commanders should feel no obligation to attempt what was impossible. In fact, any such effort violates Heaven's will. Having set the broader stage – the futility of further resistance against the Ming – Zhu Yuanzhang then addresses one of the most volatile issues of the late fourteenth century, loyalty or allegiance. As previous chapters show, Zhu Yuanzhang frequently defended his actions. His decision to take up arms, seize territory, and eventually found a dynasty, he insisted, was not a betrayal of the Great Yuan. He knew that men were unlikely to discard allegiances lightly, in part because they feared their peers' denunciation. Zhu Yuanzhang attempts to ease the transfer of allegiance in two ways. First, he delimits the loyalty owed to the Great Yuan. Second, he assures that the Ming dynasty would hold no grudges against former enemies. The hope was that Great Yuan commanders would feel neither shame nor fear in offering their allegiance to Zhu Yuanzhang and his Great Ming.

[9] *DMTZ*, 2.4b, vol. 1, p. 242; *MTZSL*, 53.7b, p. 1046. See also *DMTZ*, 2.29b, vol. 1, p. 292.
[10] *DMTZ*, 2.3b, vol. 1, p. 240; *MTZSL*, 52.10b, p. 1030.
[11] *DMTZ*, 7.10b, vol. 2, p. 254.
[12] *DMTZ*, 2.7b, vol. 2, p. 248; *MTZSL*, 75.3a, p. 1387; *DMTZ*, 6.32a, vol. 2, p. 65; *DMTZ*, 7.14b, vol. 2, p. 182; *DMTZ*, 6.4a, vol. 2, p. 69; *MTZSL*, 199.5b, p. 2990.
[13] *DMTZ*, 2.7b, vol. 2, p. 248; *MTZSL*, 75.3a, p. 1387.
[14] *DMTZ*, 2.5a–b, vol. 1, pp. 243–44; *MTZSL*, 53.8a, p. 1047; *DMTZ*, 2.32b, vol. 1, p. 295; *MTZSL*, 56.7a–b, pp. 1099–1100.
[15] *DMTZ*, 6.32a, vol. 2, p. 65; *MTZSL*, 75.3a, p. 1387; *DMTZ*, 2.30b, vol. 1, p. 294.

One way to delimit obligations of loyalty was to tie allegiance to either the Great Yuan dynasty or a particular ruler. As previous chapters show, Zhu Yuanzhang pointed to several events – all with different dates – as proof that the Great Yuan had come to an irreversible end: the spread of rebellion in the 1350s, Daidu's fall in 1368, Toghan-Temür's death and Ayushidara's flight from Yingchang in 1370, and Ayushiridara's death in 1378. In a 1370 announcement to the officials and people of Liaoyang (that is, people under Naghachu), Zhu Yuanzhang declares that with Toghan-Temür's demise and Ayushiridara's panicked escape, the dynasty had ended.[16] The implicit message is that allegiances need to be reconsidered. In a 1378 communication to Qara-Jang, Manzi, Lüer, and Naghachu, Zhu Yuanzhang fulsomely praises their steadfast loyalty to the Great Yuan ruling house.

> I recently learned that the ruler you defended has passed away because of illness. You gentlemen can be said to have been loyal from beginning to end. Your reputation as excellent ministers has already spread widely. Although in the past you were someone's ministers, now, however, that [duty] has been fulfilled.

With Ayushiridara's death, their obligations have ended. Growing political strife now threatens to destroy their sterling reputations as loyal ministers.[17] The same year, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote to Naghachu, "You are a Yuan minister; loyalty is loyalty.[18] Why do you bring suffering on yourself by violating the affairs of men and forfeiting virtue?" The greater virtue now, Zhu Yuanzhang maintains, is to protect Naghachu's people's lives.[19]

Another strategy was to label ostensible devotion to the Great Yuan as imperfect, self-serving, or vainglorious. Zhu repeatedly questions Köke-Temür's true loyalty. In a 1368 letter to a newly enthroned regional ruler, Zhu mocks Köke-Temür for "both failing to fulfill fidelity to repay his lord and failing to obey Heaven to save his people."[20] If Köke-Temür were truly the Yuan throne's loyal servant, he would have committed suicide when Daidu fell, which, in Zhu Yuanzhang's view, marked the Yuan dynasty's end. In letters to Köke-Temür, Zhu Yuanzhang again and again challenges his true commitment to the Great Yuan ruling house. "If you were to repay your lord with a red-hot heart of loyalty," Zhu Yuanzhang argues, Köke-Temür should place his men, supplies, and stratagems at the Yuan court's disposal, instead of

[16] *DMTZ*, 2.31a, vol. 1, p. 295; *MTZSL*, 56.7a–b, pp. 1099–1100.
[17] *DMTZ*, 2.9b–10a, vol. 1, pp. 252–53; *MTZSL*, 121.5a, p. 1967.
[18] The phrase appears to come from a passage in "Jian ben" in *Shuo yuan* by Liu Xiang (77–76 BCE). "Loyalty is loyalty, but it is not propriety." Liu draws a contrast between behavior and the intentions that inform such behavior.
[19] *DMTZ*, 2.8b, vol. 1, p. 250; *MTZSL*, 119.5a, p. 1943. See also *MTZSL*, 52.10b, p. 1030; *DMTZ*, 7.26b, vol. 2, p. 206; *MTZSL*, 22.4b, p. 320.
[20] *DMTZ*, 7.17b, vol. 2, p. 188; *MTZSL*, 37.23a, p. 751.

using them to maintain his own power.[21] Zhu criticizes one Great Yuan commander for abandoning his ruler when he was most needed. The Ming emperor further argues that for military and political reasons, continued resistance to the Ming was bound to fail.[22] Both before and after Daidu's fall in 1368, he accused ostensible Yuan loyalists of usurping the Great Yuan emperor's authority to pursue their own self-interest.[23] In other words, Zhu Yuanzhang attempts to both circumscribe the demands of continued loyalty to the Great Yuan and debunk any such refusals to recognize the Ming dynasty.

Another way to reduce men's sense of obligation to the Great Yuan was to assure them that the Ming court would extend generous treatment to the Chinggisid ruling family in particular and Great Yuan nobles in general. There was no need to defend them to the death. Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly acknowledges the Chinggisid ruling family's special status and highlighted its preferential treatment under his rule. In a letter to Naghachu, a Mongol noble and descendant of the fabled military commander Muqali (1170–1223), Zhu Yuanzhang writes, "I treated you differently from other prisoners. I knew that you were of an illustrious family and thus released you to go home."[24] In several announcements, including those directed explicitly at Great Yuan nobles, Zhu Yuanzhang notes how he had "taken pity" on Maidaribala, sparing the young Chinggisid noble the humiliation of being presented as a prisoner of war at the Ming ancestral temple.[25] One communication begins with the full and formal title of respect "Darmaraǰa, the Grandson of the Prince of Wujing who Pacifies the West, son of the Emperor of the Great Yuan."[26] Zhu Yuanzhang stresses that he rejected previous polities' practice of purging members of the fallen dynastic house. The Ming emperor observes that he permits Great Yuan nobles to come and go as they please. "Since the dynasty's

[21] *DMTZ*, 7.50a, vol. 2, p. 253; *MTZSL*, 25.8b, p. 376.

[22] *DMTZ*, 7.59a–b, vol. 2, pp. 271–72; *MTZSL*, 60.6a, p. 1177. Mutiny among Tughlugh's men was one of four reasons Zhu Yuanzhang argued Tughlugh was bound to fail.

[23] *MTZSL*, 12.9a, p. 163; *DMTZ*, 7.44b, vol. 2, p. 242; *MTZSL*, 15.8b, p. 210*DMTZ*, 7.45b, vol. 2, p. 244; *MTZSL*, 17.5b, p. 236; *DMTZ*, 7.47a, vol. 2, p. 247; *MTZSL*, 20.8b, p. 290; *DMTZ*, 7.24a, vol. 2, p. 201; *DMTZ*, 7.28b, vol. 2, p. 210.

[24] *DMTZ*, 7.58a, vol. 2, p. 269; *MTZSL*, 66.8b, p. 1250.

[25] 2.5b, vol. 1, p. 244; *MTZSL*, 53.8a, p. 1047; *DMTZ*, 2.6b–7a, vol. 1, pp. 246–47; *HMZZ*, 1.38b (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 553).

[26] Son of Budnara (alternately transcribed as Budnal) (Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 218–19), who had transferred his allegiance to the Ming in 1371, Darmaraǰa succeeded to his father's post in Hezhou, and presumably the title of Prince of Liao, in 1376. See *MTZSL*, 110.4b, p. 1826; Serruys, *Mongols in China*, fn. 280, p. 220. The editors of the *Ming Veritable Records* write that when Budnara presented himself at court, Zhu Yuanzhang "was mindful that he was a Chinggisid descendant and treated him with extreme generosity." When Budnara died in 1373, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that local authorities were to organize his burial and provide any needed materials. See *MTZSL*, 83.6a, p. 1491. Prior to succeeding to his father's post, Darmaraǰa had been given permission to wear a sword while on duty in the imperial guard, a gesture of trust and honor. See *MTZSL*, 108.6a, p. 1807.

establishment," he begins, "among you Chinggisid descendants resident within China, there have been several men, who without reason [left our dynasty and], returned alive [to the steppe]." The Ming court's liberality extends even to its greatest rivals. "The man who now rules the steppe is among their number," he pointed out.[27]

To persuade men to abandon their ties to the Great Yuan and to offer their allegiance to the Great Ming, Zhu Yuanzhang seeks to allay their fears.[28] In a 1374 message to Nair-Buqa, the Ming founder insists that he has no intention of extracting vengeance for past raids. "Who does not know that in governing the realm, the ancients focused exclusively on bringing peace to the people? How could they have harbored private vendettas to bring harm to living beings?"[29] Zhu Yuanzhang uses loyalty to the Great Yuan to forgive past hostilities. As a Great Yuan commander, Nair-Buqa had "no choice but to listen to the commands" of Ayushiridara.[30] How could Zhu Yuanzhang possibly blame a military man for following orders? Naghachu murdered 8,000 Ming troops, Zhu Yuanzhang observed a year later. However, if Naghachu were to submit, past enmity would "melt like ice or burn away like fire."[31] Fifteen years later in 1390, several Great Yuan commanders considered an alliance with the Ming dynasty. Zhu Yuanzhang reminded them of his generous treatment of his former foe, Naghachu, who joined the Ming in 1387. Despite having killed 200,000 Ming soldiers and subjects, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote, Naghachu received handsome rewards and honors for himself and his men.[32]

Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang urges Great Yuan personnel to recognize the exigencies of a new age. Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly counsels men "to recognize the needs of the age," "to discern the subtle signs," not to mistake "the direction of the age" and "to recognize whether Heaven's Mandate and the people's inclinations are lost or remain."[33] In the closing passage of a note to Nair-Buqa, the Ming emperor offers counsel: "If there are those among you who understand fortune, have them observe the astronomical phenomena

[27] *DMTZ*, 6.32b–33a, vol. 2, pp. 66–67; *MTZSL*, 37.23a, p. 751.
[28] *DMTZ*, 7.26b, vol. 2, p. 206; *MTZSL*, 22.4b, p. 320.
[29] *DMTZ*, 7.60a, vol. 2, p. 273; *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 2b (*MCKG*, vol. 3, p. 1778); *MTZSL*, 7.7a–b, pp. 1613–14.
[30] *DMTZ*, 7.60a–b, vol. 2, pp. 273–74; *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 2b (*MCKG*, vol. 3, p. 1778); *MTZSL*, 7.7a–b, pp. 1613–14.
[31] *DMTZ*, 2.9b, vol. 1, p. 252; *HMZZ*, 1.77a (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 572). I take Nahashu as a scribal error for Nahachu.
[32] *DMTZ*, 6.3b–4b, vol. 2, pp. 68–70; *MTZSL*, 199.5b–6a, pp. 2990–91.
[33] For examples, see, *DMTZ*, 2.4b, vol. 1, p. 242; *DMTZ*, 2.8b, vol. 1, p. 250; 2.31a, vol. 1, p. 295; *DMTZ*, 2.31b, vol. 1, p. 296; *DMTZ*, 7.19a, vol. 2, p. 191; *DMTZ*, 2.19a, vol. 1, p. 277.

above and human affairs below. Would it not be preferable if you yourself were to chose a path that avoids calamity and leads to prosperity?"[34]

Zhu Yuanzhang does his best to represent circumstances in a way that favors his cause. Marshaling evidence from the political, military, and cosmic realms, he tries to convince loyalists that the Great Yuan is doomed, thus freeing them from any further responsibility to its defense. He further argues with the dynasty's fall and/or the death of its reigning Great Khan, duty to the Great Yuan must be considered complete. At the same time, he impugns the motives of ostensible loyalists, decrying their cynical manipulation of the Great Yuan's name and authority.[35] Finally, he knew that individual men would make their own decisions based on their interpretation of the world and their place in it.[36] Thus, he urges them to observe the "subtle signs" and closely consider their choices.

Before considering the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative in communications with the Timurid and Moghul polities, let us briefly examine a rare surviving example of how the Ming court translated its rhetoric into the Mongolian language. The Mongolian translation (transcribed in Chinese characters) is of one of Zhu Yuanzhang's letters to Chinggisid noble, Ajashira, Prince of Liao. It is one of twelve correspondences between the Ming throne and a handful of Mongol leaders appended to an imperially compiled Sino-Mongolian dictionary, the *Hua Yi yi yu*, completed late in the Hongwu reign. Given the frequency with which the early Ming court conducted negotiations with Mongol personnel from the Great Yuan, it is nearly certain that these twelve communications represent only a small sampling of a far larger corpus of materials now lost. Especially striking is that at least eleven of the twelve have been attributed to the narrow span of 1388–89.[37] They were likely selected for inclusion in the appendix as templates of routine correspondence.

Before examining Zhu Yuanzhang's rhetoric and its Mongolian translation, let us first consider the circumstances that produced the correspondence. In the wake of Naghachu's fateful decision to join the Ming in 1387, the devastating Ming raid on the Yuan court at Buir Lake in the spring of 1388, and the assassination of Toghus-Temür that followed shortly later, Ajashiri indicated an interest in transferring his allegiance to the Ming dynasty. According to an entry in the *Ming Veritable Records*, in mid-October of 1388, the Prince of Liao and forth-nine subordinates came in submission. Military authorities at

[34] *DMTZ*, 7.60b, vol. 2, p. 274 and *Ci zhu fan zhao chi*, 2b (*MCKG*, vol. 3, p. 1778); *MTZSL*, 7.7b, p. 1614.

[35] Questioning motives of ostensible loyalists was a strategy that Zhu Yuanzhang used with other audiences. See *DMTZ*, 7.3b, vol. 2, p. 160.

[36] *DMTZ*, 6.11a, vol. 2, p. 84; *MTZSL*, 196.6a, p. 2951.

[37] Serruys, "Dates of the Mongolian Documents." Serruys tentatively identifies one letter from 1384, but one wonders whether it too might be from 1388–89.

the Liaodong Regional Military Commission escorted them to court to present horses to the throne.[38] Although there is reason to doubt that Ajashiri actually traveled to Nanjing to meet with the emperor, this was a coup for Zhu Yuanzhang. Encamped along the eastern slope of the Khinggan Mountains, Ajashiri belonged to the prestigious House of Otchigin (Chinggis's younger brother), a powerful political and military force throughout the life of the Mongol empire.[39] In mid-December of 1388, two months after pledging his loyalty to the Ming, Ajashiri ordered Tabin-Temür, who the Yuan court had invested as the Prince of Ning, to surrender to the Ming. As a token of good faith, Tabin-Temür presented to the Ming throne an imperial edict previously issued by Toghus-Temür.[40] It seems likely that Ajashiri sent Tabin-Temür to Nanjing to test the waters. The following year in 1389, the Ming throne established the Three Guards along the Khinggan's eastern slope.[41]

The Ming court considered the Three Guards as "loose-rein" garrisons. They received investiture from the Ming court and enjoyed access to the Ming economy through border markets and gift exchanges with the Ming throne in the capital. However, they retained a high degree of autonomy, selecting their own leaders, conducting their own foreign relations, and remaining free from such obligations as taxes or compulsory labor service to the Ming state.[42] Nonetheless, Zhu Yuanzhang was glad to secure nominal allegiance from an influential Chinggisid family member. In June 1389, Zhu Yuanzhang appointed Ajashiri and Tabin-Temür as Commander and Vice Commander of Taining Guard, respectively.[43]

Because the focus here is the language and rhetoric of the early Ming court's appeal to Great Yuan elites, the following section first offers a full translation

[38] *MTZSL*, 193.6a, p. 2903.

[39] The House of Otchigin was one of the Three Princely Houses of the Eastern Regions. See Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 25–28. It is unclear when Ajashiri became Prince of Liao. In 1329, Gunashiri was invested as Prince of Liao and was given Toqto'a's seal (see preceding footnote). Ajashiri does not appear in See *YS*, 33.3.737, *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*. The *Ming Veritable Records* do not provide a date for his investiture.

[40] *MTZSL*, 194.4a–b, pp. 2915–16.

[41] For the Three Guards, see Atwood, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 535–36; Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 227–29.

[42] For the Otchigin House's role in northeast Asian politics of the fourteenth century, especially its connections to the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty, Yi Sŏng-gye (1335–1408, r. 1392–98), and his family, see Yun Ŭnsuk, "14 segimal Manju."

[43] At the same time, a local leader of the Mongolized Tungusic Üjiyed, Qaisan-Andaki, was made the Vice Commander of Fuyu Guard and Torghuchar of the Uriyangkhan clan was appointed as Vice Commander of the Döyin Guard. See *DMTZ*, 2.28b–29a, vol. 2, pp. 118–19; *MTZSL*, 196.3b–4a, pp. 2946–47. On these appointments, see Serruys, *Mongols in China*, p. 228. For the French translation of this edict's Mongolian translation, see Mostaert, *Le matériél mongol*, vol. 1, pp. 15–17. The expression about Heaven blessing the good and visiting calamity on the bad comes from the "Announcement of Tang," "The Book of Shang" in the *Book of History*. See Legge, *The Shou King*, Bk. III, ch. II, vol. 3, p. 186.

of the original Chinese version of Zhu Yuanzhang's letter to Ajashiri.[44] It then looks at how key ideas such as change, choice, and destiny are translated into terms that resonate in Mongolian political culture. Like the Song, Yuan, and Qing dynasties, Ming chancellery protocol dictates that documents signal importance and status by putting key words, which commonly include the emperor or Heaven, at the beginning of a new line of text. Consequently, they are elevated one, or sometimes two, characters above the remainder of the text. The visual prominence of the word 'Heaven' in the original document is striking. All but four lines begin with 'Heaven.'"

One cannot know the number of people covered by Heaven above and supported by Earth below, yet Heaven is able to know. Heaven is able to govern through control of good and bad fortune for people. There are no people between Heaven and Earth who dare disrespect Heaven, because there is evidence that it brings disaster or good fortune. From antiquity to the present, whenever people are numerous, there is a ruler. Heaven inevitably selects someone to rule them on behalf of Heaven's Principle. When someone above obeys Heaven's Way and is diligent in governing without falsity, good fortune will be without a fixed limited. If there is a beginning but no end, if they neglect governance and harm the people, Heaven is bound to change its selection. In the past, two centuries ago, the northern horsemen and the Han were under different rule. Power was divided north and south. Why? The Han ruler misgoverned. The northern horsemen ruler was not benevolent. Heaven selected the Yuan to rule. They gradually multiplied on the grasslands, suppressed the villains, and subjugated the boreal region. Later [their descendants], obeying Heaven's Way, settled China, and unified north and south. The northern horsemen and the Han became a single family. When rule reached Toghan-Temür, he was negligent in his devotion to the people's affairs. The assembled heroes all rose. Thereupon, Heaven changed the Yuan's fortunes. Whereas, Our Great Ming ruled China and the barbarians. To speak of the Yuan's power, not only was what they unified expansive, their skill in mounted archery was outstanding. As soon as Heaven changed [its fortunes], [their] expansive lands were carved like melons and the territory rent asunder. [Their] mounted archery was just like a game. If this was not Heaven's Way, who could have done it?

You Ajashiri are after all a Yuan descendant. You understand that Heaven's Mandate has a home. Your coming in submission is like Weizi's embrace of the sacrificial vessel and submission to the Zhou dynasty. How could there be anything inappropriate about your obedience to Heaven's Way? However, coming in submission is exceedingly easy; remaining steadfast forever is difficult. Unless one is as faithful as metal and stone, it is difficult to obey Heaven. If, along the way, you have treasonous plans, disaster and good fortune will change as easily as if turning over the palm of the hand. Since you Ajashiri and other similar men have in good faith come in submission, you absolutely

[44] Using a corresponding entry in the *Ming Veritable Records*, Serruys ("Dates of the Mongolian Documents," p. 419) dates the edict to June 19, 1389. As Serruys notes, this entry summarizes several documents, including two communications with Ajashiri, one of which is translated shortly. Thus, we cannot conclude that the letter to Ajashiri in *Hua yi yi yu* should be dated to the MSL entry. The letter as preserved in *DMTZ* is not dated.

have no treasonous plans. In the past, the northern horsemen and the Han were a single family. The northern horsemen ruler was in command. The Heaven's Way favors repayment. Recently the northern horsemen and the Han have become a single family. The Great Ming is in command. This is the inevitability of Heaven's Principle. [It] is something not subject to change. You recently obeyed Our command. You are content in your station and preserve your status. You follow water and grasslands to take pleasure in Heaven's pleasure, are benevolent in supporting your people, and command them to multiply. Above, this accords with Heaven's mind. How could you fail to prosper?[45]

Zhu Yuanzhang uses the aforementioned arguments and rhetorical strategies. These include the assertion that Heaven selects and removes rulers based on their devotion to governance and efficacy. To make clear that no ruler and no people hold power permanently, he establishes an exact analogy between the Yuan and Ming unification of the realm and rule over both the Han and northern horsemen. Just as the Yuan replaced a corrupt Song, now the Ming takes the place of a fallen Yuan. Zhu Yuanzhang exculpates Ajashiri of any disloyalty to the Great Yuan: He argues that Ajashiri is obeying Heaven's will; the Yuan lost power because of Toghan-Temür's poor leadership; and Ajashiri's decision to submit to the Ming dynasty is like Weizi's submission to the venerable Zhou dynasty to ensure offerings to his forefathers. Finally, Zhu Yuanzhang recognizes the Chinggisid family's special status and promises Ajashiri that loyalty and obedience to the Ming dynasty will lead to good lands and a growing subordinate population. Absent is any mention of the reigning Great Khan, Engke (r. 1389?–92?).

Let us now look at how Ming court translators communicated key ideas into the Mongolian language.[46] "Northern horsemen ruler" becomes "Mongol Great Khan of the Great Yuan" (Dai Ön Mongqol qahan). "Northern horsemen and the Han" is "the Mongols (Mongqol) and the Kitai (Khitad)."[47] By the eleventh century, Han had become one way to refer to "the Chinese."[48] Prominent throughout the document, Heaven is translated as

[45] *DMTZ*, 2.29a–31a, vol. 1, pp. 292–94. In a text of 389 characters, "Heaven" appears twenty-two times.

[46] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, pp. 209–14; Mostaert, *Le matériél mongol*, vol. 1, pp. 1–2 (Mongolian transcription), pp. 15–17 (French translation); Haenisch, *Sino-Mongolische Dokumente*, pp. I–IV. Mongolian transcription follows Mostaert with one exception. I use Ön for Yuan.

[47] Khitad (Kitai) referred to the Kitan, who created the Liao dynasty, which survived in Central Asia as the Kara-Kitai or Black Chathay. During the Yuan period, Kitai denoted the inhabitants of northern China, as opposed to the "southerners." During the Yuan period, "Han" was a broad category that encompassed Chinese, Jurchen, and occasionally Korean populations living in northern China.

[48] Tackett (*Origins*) suggests that the emergence of "Han" to refer to the Chinese was part of the Chinese nation's emergence.

tenggeri. Heaven's Mandate is rendered as *tenggeri-yin ǰaya'an*.[49] Drawing on equivalences developed during the Yuan period, Ming translators used the term *tenggeri ǰaya* as a gloss for a cluster of ideas that included not only Heaven's Mandate (*tianming*) but also Heaven's Fortune (*tianyun*) and destiny/fortune (*qishu*). Just as was true with the Chinese term *ming*, *jaya* connoted command, fortune, and/or destiny.[50] The Chinese phrase "Heaven changed the Yuan's fortune" is translated as "Tenggeri changed the *jaya* of the Mongol Great Khan of the Great Yuan" (tenggeri Dai Ön mongqol qahan-nu ǰayān-i ye'ütkeǰü) and entrusted Zhu Yuanzhang with command. Tenggeri's favor and the special destiny of Chinggis and his descendants were central features of the Mongols' Chinggisid narrative, which during the time of empire had been translated into Chinese, Persian, Tibetan, Uyghur, and several European languages.[51]

Scholars past and present have suggested that the Ming's primary objective in forging ties with men like Ajashiri and non-Chinggisid leaders was twofold, to forestall their alliance with the eastern Mongols and to cultivate them as sources of intelligence in the region.[52] In addition, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors sought recognition from Chinggisids like Ajashiri as evidence of Ming rulership's superiority. For all these reasons, the early Ming court tried to tell the story of the Yuan's rise and fall in terms that Chinggisid elites would find compelling. The submission of Great Yuan leaders such as Naghachu, Ajashiri, Nair-Buqa, and scores others no doubt owes much to the Ming dynasty's successful use of military pressure and economic incentives. Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts at suasion are much harder to assess, but the Ming emperor thought they were worth his time.

Before turning to the Timurid and Moghul courts, let us briefly consider what and how Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors knew about the Great Yuan commanders, their perceptions of the Great Yuan, and the memories of the Mongol empire. First, as this and previous chapters have shown, Zhu Yuanzhang actively recruited Great Yuan military, from the senior-most commanders to lesser leaders. When such men joined the Ming dynasty, they often traveled to Nanjing for one or more audiences with Zhu Yuanzhang. A portion settled permanently in the capital, usually with their families and close supporters. Again as previous chapters have demonstrated, the Ming emperor often used such men as envoys in negotiations with Great Yuan commanders, for instance Guantong defusing tensions during negotiations with Naghachu and later persuading Nair-Buqa to submit to the Prince of Yan. He also employed them as advisors in military campaigns on the steppe. Second,

[49] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, p. 216. [50] *HYYY* in *HFLB*, vol. 4, pp. 218–21.
[51] For elaboration, see Robinson, "Translating Rulership."
[52] Song Dehui, "Mingchao Tainingwei," pp. 58–59.

strikes against the mobile court of the Great Khan (most notably in 1370 and 1388) resulted in the capture of tens of thousands of Great Yuan elites and their households. Third, large numbers of Great Yuan personnel, whether Mongol, Turkic, Korean, Chinese, or others, remained in territory held by Zhu Yuanzhang rather than accompanying the Great Khan to the steppe. Fourth, the Ming emperor gathered intelligence from his envoys and others who negotiated with Great Yuan commanders. Fifth, *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* provided details about individual families' forefathers and their standing within the Mongol empire. Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang had ready sources of both historic and current information about individual Great Yuan commanders, their families, their senior supporters (and rivals), and their relations with the Great Yuan. Based on what these men and women revealed, Zhu Yuanzhang knew enough about the special status of Chinggisid nobles and the upper echelon of Great Yuan commanders to show proper deference to their status. He customized his appeal to their individual military and political strengths and vulnerabilities. He consistently praised Chinggis and Qubilai as chosen men whose wisdom, strength, and special fate led to glory and power. The Great Yuan's fall likewise grew from later Great Khans' failure to preserve and respect their forefathers' heritage. In other words, based on a broad body of knowledge, Zhu Yuanzhang customized his story to the particular sensibilities of his audience. The following section will show that Zhu Yuanzhang often lacked such full and nuanced information for more distant leaders, which led in turn to less fine-grained arguments.

The Timurid and Moghul Courts

As noted in Chapter 1, during the second half of the fourteenth century, Tamerlane built an empire out of the remnants of the Ikhanate and the Chaghadaid khanate. He drew liberally from the Mongol empire's political symbols, military and administrative institutions, and personnel. Memory of Chinggis khan's unique charisma figured prominently in his efforts to establish legitimacy and attract followers. Documented contacts between the Timurid and Ming courts date from the last decade or so of Zhu Yuanzhang's reign. Tamerlane seems to have initiated ties, sending four envoy missions between 1387 and 1390.[53] A desire to forestall military cooperation between the Moghul court, his rival and immediate neighbor to the east, and Zhu Yuanzhang was one motive. He also was interested in bolstering state coffers through promotion of trade with the Ming dynasty. It is unclear whether he believed that gift and envoy exchanges with the Ming court would improve his

[53] Kauz, *Politik und Handel*, pp. 53–54.

standing in Central Asia. Winning the recognition of an ascendant court from the Chinggisid world likely figured in Zhu Yuanzhang's calculations. Securing another supply of top-quality horses, an enduring concern, may have been another factor for the Ming emperor.[54]

Zhu Yuanzhang understood that the Chinggisid world extended throughout East and Central Asia. The *Ming Veritable Records* of his reign regularly refer to Tamerlane as "Royal Son-in-law Temür of Samarqand," a designation that perfectly reflects Tamerlane's title as *gūrgān* (the Persianized form of the Mongolian term for royal in-law, *güregen*), which appeared on coins issued in his name.[55] The Ming court understood whose son-in-law he was and why the title mattered.[56] Zhu Yuanzhang also knew that Samarqand, Tamerlane's show-place capital, was home to a Chinggisid community. In 1390, the Ming emperor sent sixty-seven households of "Tatar princes-of-the-blood" to live there, although his motives are not explained.[57] The following year in Nanjing, he received "eighteen men, including the Tatar prince Bayan-Qutlug, from the Western Region Samarqand who came to court to present 52 horses."[58]

According to *The Ming Veritable Records*, in 1394 Tamerlane delivered a *biao*, a form of diplomatic communication from a ruler of lesser status to one of greater status. In this document, Tamerlane recognizes Zhu Yuanzhang as a peerless ruler who possessed Heaven's sanction. Few believe that Tamerlane composed the letter as it reads today.[59] More important is what it tells us about how the Ming emperor wished to be perceived. The Chinese version of the text reads in part:

To the Great Emperor of the Great Ming:

The Great Emperor received Heaven's Brilliant Mandate to unify [all within] the four seas. [His] benevolence and virtue spread broadly; his favor supports all kinds. The myriad countries gaze up with joy; all understand that Heaven Above wished to order

[54] On the presentation of horses from Samarqand to the Ming court during Zhu Yuanzhang's reign, see Pan and Wang, "Hongwu nianjian," p. 38; Zhang Wende, *Chaogong yu rufu*, p. 15.

[55] *MTZSL*, 185.3a–b, pp. 2779–80; *MTZSL*, 193.6b–7a pp. 2904–5; *MTZSL*, 197.5b, p. 2962; *MTZSL*, 211.1a, p. 3133; *MTZSL*, 217.1a, p. 3187; *MTZSL*, 234.3b, p. 3420. The mid-sixteenth century political encyclopedia, *Xu wen xian tong kao*, refers to Tamerlane as "the Yuan/Chinggisid Royal Son-in-law Temür." See Wang Qi, *Xu wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 237, p. 14125. In his seventeenth-century political encyclopedia, Xu Xueju uses the same title for Tamerlane. See Xu Xueju, *Guo chao dian hui*, *juan* 175, 12a. During Shāhrukh's reign, only some coins carried the title "imperial son-in-law." For a brief description of a Shāhrukh-era coin found in 1983 in the Haidian district in Beijing, that does not have such an inscription, see Bao Qixiang, "Beijing faxian de Shahhalu yinbi."

[56] For literature review of Ming-Timurid relations, see Rajkai, "Early Fifteenth-Century."

[57] *MTZSL*, 206.2a, p. 3071.

[58] *MTZSL*, 204.2a, p. 3159.

[59] Fletcher, "China and Central Asia," pp. 209–10; Kauz, *Politik und Handel*, pp. 64–66; Ma Junqi, "Xi Tiemuer Shang," p. 28; Zhang Wende, *Ming yu Tiemuer*, p. 33; Shao Xunzheng, "You Mingchuye yu Tiemuer," p. 88.

the realm and specially ordered the Emperor to accept fate and serve as the ruler of the vast multitudes.[60]

Three points merit brief mention here. First, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors had fought for decades to win dynastic recognition from its neighbors as the Great Ming. During the dynasty's early years, those affiliated with the Yuan court had refused to recognize Zhu Yuanzhang's regime as the Great Ming, instead referring to its armies as Red Turbans, bandits, sorcerers, and other derogatory terms. Even the Koryŏ court had relativized the Ming's position by using both Great Yuan and the Great Ming in diplomatic correspondence. Here, the communication addresses Zhu Yuanzhang as emperor of the Great Ming. Second, and similarly, the Ming ruler worked hard to persuade neighbors that he held exclusive possession of Heaven's Mandate. He firmly rejected the possibility that the Great Yuan held a similar mandate. Finally, the term *yunshu*, here loosely translated as "fate," resonates with one of the Ming court's favorite motifs, the idea of an allotted span of dynastic rule (*yun*), which in the Chinggisids' case, the Ming court insisted, had expired. As noted, the Ming court translated the term *jaya* in Mongolian language to represent *yun*.

When translating *yun* into Persian, the Ming court used the term *daur*. Among its many meanings, *daur* can refer to time, an age, the world, and fortune. *Daur* is a cognate of *dawlat*, which is derived from the Arabic verb *dāla* or "To change, turn, or rotate" and as a noun means turn of fate, good fortune, and dynasty.[61] *Dawlat* had a long history in Persio-Islamic political philosophy, and cultural brokers at the Ilkhanid court used the term to convey Mongol notions of sovereignty in Iranian and Islamic idioms.[62] *Dawlat*'s range of meanings overlapped with the Mongolian *keshig* (which comes from the Turkic *kezik*), which also included guard and, because the guard shared in the blessing of the Great Khan, good fortune.[63] Although it may have been aware of such a *daur-keshig* Persian-Mongol correspondence, the early Ming court was more likely working from Chinese-Mongolian and Chinese-Persian correspondences.

Few Persian language versions of the Ming court's diplomatic communications survive. One is an early fifteenth-century letter from Zhu Yuanzhang's son and eventual successor, Zhu Di, to Tamerlane's son and eventual successor, Shāhrukh. In this document, the Ming court used the Persian term *daur* (*dawlut*) as an equivalent to *yun*. *Yun*/*dawlat* appears in a clear statement that

[60] *MTZSL*, 234.3b, p. 3420. [61] Allsen, "Note on Mongol Imperial Ideology," p. 7.
[62] Personal communication (May 12, 2015) with Jonathan Brack, who generously shared a draft of a portion of his dissertation where he makes this argument.
[63] Allsen, "Note on Mongol Imperial Ideology," p. 7. I thank Stephen Dale for his comments on the etymology of *daur* (personal communication July 22 and July 25, 2015).

the fortunes of the Yuan/Chinggisids had ended.[64] As previous chapters have shown, Tamerlane explicitly embraced the Chinggisid mantle. He was unlikely to have acquiesced to the Ming court's efforts to extinguish the Great Yuan's fortunes.[65]

What were Zhu Yuanzhang's sources of information about Tamerlane and his growing empire?[66] Judging from surviving sources, Ming dynastic missions to Tamerlane's court began late in Zhu Yuanzhang's reign. As discussed shortly, in 1389, the Ming court dispatched a mission to return merchants from Samarqand and elsewhere captured in battle on the steppe. Details of its itinerary do not survive. The first fully attested mission was in 1395. One of the principal envoys was detained, but the others were allowed to return to Nanjing, where they would have reported to Zhu Yuanzhang.[67] Another mission was sent in 1397 but not permitted to return until 1408. Thus, Ming envoys' reports likely provided limited information about Tamerlane's Chinggisid narrative.

In contrast, during the Hongwu period (between 1387 and 1397), nine envoy missions from Samarqand arrived in Nanjing (a tenth stopped in Liangzhou along the Ming's western border). In addition, in 1391 a mission from the Moghul khanate traveled to Zhu Yuanzhang's court.[68] Such envoy missions certainly provided information, but few details survive. These missions ranged in size from a few dozen to several hundred people. Ming state regulations required documentation verifying the name and title of each mission member. They traveled from the western border across the entire

[64] A copy of the Persian translation is preserved in Abd-ur-Razzaq's *Matla-us-Sadain wa Majma-ul-Bahrain*, which Edgar Blochet reproduced and translated in his *Introduction à l'histoire des Mongols*, p. 246. I thank my colleague Jyoti Balachandran for her generous help in translating this section of the Persian text. For tentative reconstruction of the Chinese original based on the Persian text and an abbreviated version of the original found in the eighteenth-century *Official History of the Ming Dynasty* (*MS*, 332.28.8610), see Shao Xunzheng, "You Mingchuye yu Tiemuer." As Liu Yingsheng ("Bai Aerxintai jiqi chushi," pp. 326–28) notes, the Persian translation includes a number of Ming official titles and personal names that are transcribed rather than translated. W. Chamber's English translation appears in his essay, "An Account of Embassies and Letters That Passed between the Emperor of China and Sultan Shah Rokh." It is reproduced in Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, fn. 1104, pp. 280–82. Chamber's translation also obscures the sense of "the end of fortune." He renders the passage, "The government of the Moghuls was some time extinct."

[65] For Shāhrukh's response, which addressed both his Islamic and Chinggisid pedigrees, see Brack, "Theologies of Auspicious Kingship."

[66] Rossabi ("Ming Officials") reviews the Ming state's knowledge of Central Asia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[67] Zhang Wende, *Ming yu Tiemuer*, pp. 69–71; Verschuer, "Die Beziehungen," pp. 64–65; Enoki, "Fu An's Mission," p. 219. Fu An was detained for nearly thirteen years. Gao Yongjiu ("Tiemuer," pp. 57–58) argues that Tamerlane did not detain Fu An. His much delayed return to the Ming court resulted from an extended tour he received in Timurid territory and uncertain transportation routes, primarily in the Moghul khanate.

[68] Watanabe, "Index of Embassies and Tribute Missions," pp. 305–6; Verschuer, "Die Beziehungen," pp. 65–66.

length of the Ming empire along dynastic highways and stayed at imperial relay stations. They sojourned in the capital for weeks and sometimes months, where at formal receptions, audiences with the emperor, and informal (and possibly illicit) meetings with local traders, there was ample opportunity to share information about Tamerlane, his exploits, his genealogy, his allies, and his enemies.[69] Clavijo points that Tamerlane ordered Tatars in his service to collect information during their sojourn in Nanjing.[70] However, entries from the *Ming Veritable Records* reveal little except the envoy mission's size, the number of horses and camels presented to the throne, and the names and titles of a small portion of the personnel.[71] It should be noted that the great majority of Timurid missions to the Ming court (seventy-eight attested instances) and Ming missions to Timurid courts (slightly more than twenty) date from the fifteenth century.[72]

A few men identified as hailing from Samarqand are known to have entered Ming dynastic service. In 1391, one was given a post in the Brocade Guard in Nanjing.[73] But the vast majority of such men – a few dozen attested examples – date from the early and mid-fifteenth century.[74] Such limited numbers stand in stark contrast with the thousands of former Great Yuan Mongolian commanders and their subordinates who joined the Ming dynasty and brought up-to-date information about the Great Yuan court and diverse memories of the Mongol empire. It is possible that these Great Yuan personnel possessed knowledge about Tamerlane. Several hundred merchants from Samarqand and elsewhere were found at the Great Yuan court in 1388 at Lake Buir. Zhu Yuanzhang held them at Nanjing for sometime, but we have no details, about what, if any, information they might have revealed to the Ming court.

In 1398, a Öljei-Temür arrived at Tamerlane's court, where he was described as an heir apparent who had been driven westward by the Oirats. This Öljei-Temür accompanied Tamerlane on the campaign against the Ming in 1405.[75] Chinese and Mongolian sources indicate that this Öljei-Temür (or Öljeitu) was a descendant of the Yuan ruling family, which may explain why Tamerlane treated his guest in a grand style. Why did he accompany Tamerlane on the campaign against the Ming? A century ago, the Japanese scholar Wada Sei offered an intriguing explanation. Tamerlane planned to use

[69] Zhang Wende (*Ming yu Tiemuer*, pp. 145–67) gives a good sense of the Ming dynasty's treatment of Timurid missions, although the discussion focuses on the fifteenth century.
[70] Clavijo, *Kelaweiyue dongshiji*, p. 159. Cited in Zhu Xinguang, "Shilun Tiemuer," p. 265.
[71] Verschuer ("Die Beziehungen," pp. 68–70) translates these entries.
[72] Zhang Wende, "Lun Ming yu Zhongya," p. 58.
[73] Zhang Wende, *Chaogong yu rufu*, p. 136.
[74] Zhang Wende, *Ming yu Tiemuer*, pp. 204–9, 211–17; Zhou Song ("Mingdai Nanjing") shows that the vast majority of Huihui (that is, folks who hail from west of the Ming territory) who became officers in the Nanjing Brocade Guard joined the Ming dynasty in the mid-fifteenth century.
[75] Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, *Ẓafar-nāma*, cited in Okada, "Life of Dayan Qaghan," pp. 49–50.

Öljei-Temür to win the support of Mongols as part of his wider effort to restore Chinggis' empire.[76] In any case, in 1408, Öljei-Temür returned to Mongolia, where he was warmly welcomed by an ambitious Eastern Mongol noble, Arugtai. Arugtai understood that the returning son, as a descendant of the Yuan ruling house, could be useful. Arugtai hoped to erode support of the current Great Khan, Gülichi, who was not of Great Yuan descent. With Arugtai behind him, Öljei-Temür won the allegiance of both eastern and western Mongol nobles and secured the position of Great Khan. He is known in most East Asian sources as Bunyasiri.[77] Wada's suggestion is a useful corrective to our tendency to focus exclusively on Timurid-Ming relations. For contemporaries it was obvious that such ties were enmeshed in the Timurid and Ming courts' deep interests in Inner Eurasian developments.[78] As Chapter 6 shows, a member of the Yuan House who had been supported for four years at Zhu Yuanzhang's court (1370–74) may have become Great Khan after returning to the steppe. Öljei-Temür's experiences also remind us that in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Mongol political world extended far beyond Mongolia or East Asia.[79] Indeed, the *Ẓafar-nāma* by Sharaf al-dīn 'Āli Yazdī (d. 1454) also notes that Ŏljei-Temür (although under the name of Tāyzī, derived from the Chinese *taizi*, heir apparent) sought refuge at Tamerlane's court, where he converted to Islam.[80]

The Ming court knew that Ŏljei-Temür had spent time with Tamerlane. Early in 1408, a Ming envoy named Liu Temür-Buqa reported to the throne that Ŏljei-Temür had sojourned in Samarqand and later fled to Besh-baliq. Now, Liu continued, the Mongols were going to put him on the throne. Zhu Di dispatched a palace eunuch and several other men to Besh-baliq to monitor Ŏljei-Temür's activities rather than launch an immediate military strike as the envoy had proposed.[81]

Tamerlane and his court were known to at least a portion of eastern Mongolian nobility of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; similarly Tamerlane evidently wished to keep his hand in Mongolian politics. This is perhaps unsurprising given Tamerlane's keen interest in the Chinggisid lineage and the large number of Mongolian nobles of various houses who joined his court or served as temporary allies in the field. In 1401/2, Tamerlane

[76] Wada, "Mindai no Mōko to Manshū," pp. 316–17.
[77] Wada, "Mindai no Mōko to Manshū," p. 317.
[78] Johann Schiltberger, a Bavarian knight held captive by one of Tamerlane's son, Aububachir, noted the presence of "the son of a king of Great Tartary" at the Timurid court. Messengers from Great Tartary requested that he be released to return home to "be responsible for the kingdom" but "to have a Chief to rule over him, who can elect or depose a king, and has also power over vassals." Aubuchachir sent him home with 600 horsemen. See Schiltberger and Telfer, *The Bondage and Travels*, pp. 33, 35.
[79] Morikawa, "Posuto-Mongoru jidai no Mongoru," p. 329.
[80] Honda, "On the Genealogy," pp. 243–44.
[81] *Ming Taizong shilu*, 75.1b–2a, pp. 1030–31.

commanded Nizām al-dīn Shāmī to compile a history of his reign. The account, *Ẓafar-nāma* (same title different author as work just noted), reviewed the names of the rulers in the Yuan, Jochi, Ilkhanate, and Chagadai houses. The account does not distinguish between those Yuan Great Khan who ruled from Daidu and those like Toghan-Temür and his successors, who ruled from the steppe. Several other histories produced at the Timurid court in the early decades of the fifteenth century relate post-1368 developments among Mongolian rulers, all under the rubric of the Uluy Yurt or Yuan court.[82]

Moghul

Finally, let us look briefly at another facet of the Zhu family's efforts to come to terms with the changing face of the Chinggisid world in Central Asia – ties with *Ulus-i Moghul*, that is, the Moghul khanate, which the Ming court generally called Besh-baliq.[83] As Chapter 1 shows, the Moghul khanate was firmly anchored within the Chinggisid fold. Its ruler at the time was Khiżr Khwāja (r. 1389–99?), a Chaghadaid nobleman.[84] The sixteenth century chronicler Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dūghlāt (1499–1551) writes that when Khiżr Khwāja was enthroned, "the splendor of the Khan came to illumine the sovereignty of the Moghuls, so that the affairs of Moghulistan prospered."[85] Moghuls here means Mongols. Khiżr Khwāja went on to conquer Qara Khwaja (that is, Gaochang, located near today's Hami) and Turpan.[86] Dūghlāt's account relates that Khiżr Khwāja's court retained many Mongol customs and respected privileges granted in earlier generations, dating back to the time of Chinggis. Khiżr Khwāja's court observed "the ancient Moghul" custom of holding a great feast when the new *koumiss* arrived in spring.[87] He also relates that "old customs and rights" were restored under his reign and writes explicitly of "seven privileges" granted during the reign of Chinggis to the ancestors of Amir Khudaidad.[88] As the following demonstrates, Zhu

[82] Honda, "On the Genealogy," pp. 233–34. Some thirteen names of Yuan Great Khans are listed in an abridgment of a history compiled by Ulugh Beg (Honda, p. 234). See also Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, pp. 118–19. In the mid-fifteenth century, the Timurid Sultan, Ulugh Beg, used "imperial son-in-law" among his titles. The British Museum holds a jade cup inscribed in Turkish with "Ulugh Beg Kuragan." See Clunas and Harrison-Hall, *Ming 50 Years*, fig. 222, p. 263.

[83] The identification of Besh-baliq or Moghulistan with the Chinggisids proved enduring. Writing in the early seventeenth century, Shen Defu (1578–1642) wrote, "the present ruler of Besh-baliq, the Princeling Muhammad, is a Chinggisid descendant." See *YHB*, *juan* 30, p. 774.

[84] Ming sources refer to him as the King of Besh-Baliq, Heidier huozhe.

[85] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Ross, p. 52; Thackston, vol. 1, p. 29).

[86] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Ross, p. 53; Thackston, vol. 1, p. 28).

[87] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Ross, p. 53; Thackston, vol. 1, p. 29). Thackston translates it as "the old institutions and regulations."

[88] Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Ross, pp. 54–56; Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 29–30).

Yuanzhang sought to make clear his status in terms that Khiżr Khwāja's court would appreciate.

In the wake of the 1388 victory over the Great Yuan court at Lake Buir, Ming forces found among their captives several hundred merchants from Samarqand. Zhu Yuanzhang first transported them to Nanjing. He later returned them to Samarqand under the escort of a Mongol prince, who presumably was in Ming service.[89] In the summer of 1391, an envoy mission sent by Khiżr Khwāja arrived in Nanjing with gifts, eleven horses and one hunting falcon. In exchange, Zhu Yuanzhang sent presents of textiles, silver, and Ming cash.[90]

Zhu Yuanzhang also sent a letter to Khiżr Khwāja. The Ming founder addresses the Moghul khan as a fellow ruler bound by common interests.

> We observe that it is impossible to know, between Heaven above and Earth below, how many [men or territories] possess dynasties. Although separated by mountains and seas, although customs and habits may vary, the sense of good and bad and the category of bravery and righteous have never differed. Great Heaven offers protection and views them as one. Thus, those who receive Heaven's Mandate to be great rulers of the realm obey Heaven's Path above. They view all with the same benevolence so that all countries great and small, peoples of divergent places and kinds, all ascend to benevolence and long life. Friendly countries and distant dynasties obey Heaven and serve the great in order to preserve their dynasties and keep the people content. Great Heaven observes them and ensures their prosperity.[91]

Zhu Yuanzhang's vision of universal rulership, incuding Heaven's protection and the people's welfare as a measure of a leader's legitimacy, has deep roots in China's political traditions. At the same time, his description also resonates strongly with Mongolian political culture, especially as it appeared in Sinophone texts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Twice in this passage Zhu Yuanzhang refers to Great Heaven. The early fourteenth century *A Guide to the Learning of Technocrats* (*Lixue zhinan*), a Sinophone dictionary of administrative and legal terms and forms, draws a direct equivalence between *tenggeri* and Great Heaven (*huangtian*).[92] Zhu Yuanzhang deliberately chose

[89] The Ming emperor would later observe to Khiżr Khwāja that after he returned the merchants to their native country, their ruler, "in gratitude to the court" had dispatched envoys to Nanjing to present tribute. See *DMTZ*, 7.65b, vol. 2, p. 284; *MTZSL*, 212.1a, p. 3141.

[90] *MTZSL*, 210.4a–b, pp. 313132.

[91] *DMTZ*, 7.64b, vol. 2, p. 282; *MTZSL*, 212.1a, p. 3141. The phrase seems to derive from an ode in the *Book of Poetry*. See Legge, "Yong"; "Chen gong zhi shi"; "Zhou song"; *She King*, Part IV, Bk. I, Ode VII, pp. 589–90.

[92] Xu Yuanrui, *Li xue zhi nan*, 2.2a–b (*XXSK*, *zi bu*, vol. 973, p. 292). In addition, the 1260 document sent to "emperor of the Southern Song" uses Great Heaven (*huangtian*) rather than Heaven Above (*shangtian*). See Funada, "Nihonen gaikō bunsho," pp. 4–5. It should be noted that more common than Great Heaven was Heaven Above (*shangtian*), which was aligned even more closely with Mongolian conceptions of Heaven, that is, *degere tenggeri*.

terms and concepts that Khiżr Khwāja and his court would find familiar and compelling. The following passage offers corroboration. Zhu Yuanzhang situates his rise in an explicitly Chinggisid context.

> In the past, the Song ruler of Our China was dissolute and indolent. Traitorous ministers threw governance into chaos. Heaven observed its lack of virtue and thereupon ordered Shizu of the Yuan (that is, Qubilai) to lay the foundations in the boreal steppe and [then] enter and rule China. The common people relied on this for peace for more than seventy years. Later successors did not devote themselves to dynastic matters of state. The wrong men served as great ministers. Decrees and regulations were utterly lax. The result was that among those in the wild, the strong preyed on the weak; the many abused the few. The people cried out in lament, which reached up to Heaven. Examination [of the Yuan ruler] was in Heaven-on-High's mind. [Heaven] changed its mandate and renewed the people. We shouldered the great mandate and took hold of the auspicious signs of rulership to rule the black-haired people. All those rebellious leaders who arrogated the emperor's awe and orders and violated Our commands were halted by the military. Those who obeyed Our commands were preserved. Thus, peace and stability came to China. Only the Yuan ministers Manzi, Qara-Jang, and other such men continued to lead remnant armies that foment hostilities and raid the border near the passes. They were a great calamity for the people. [We] issued an army to chastice them. Its force was irresistible. When the army reached Lake Buir, princes of the blood of the former Yuan, imperial sons-in-law, and their followers all came in submission to join [the Great Ming].[93]

Zhu Yuanzhang rehearses the rise and fall of the Yuan/Chinggisids for Khiżr Khwāja. When the Song dynasty had grown corrupt, recounted Zhu Yuanzhang, Heaven ordered Qubilai to rule over China, bringing peace and prosperity to the people. When Toghan-Temür failed in his duties as sovereign, Heaven similarly bid Zhu Yuanzhang to establish a new dynasty and bring order to the "Chinese and the barbarians."[94] Despite such divine sanction, Zhu fulminated, Manzi and Qara-Jang refused to recognize Heaven/Tenggri's will. Zhu Yuanzhang had no choice but to chastice them. Zhu Yuanzhang does not explain here that the Ming victory at Lake Buir was part of a campaign to crush the Great Khan, Toghus-Temür, and his court. In fact, he does not even mention a battle at Lake Buir. Instead, in his account, the Great Yuan aristocracy submitted to the Great Ming when his army arrived.

In his edict, Zhu Yuanzhang had several objectives. First, as was true in his communication with other leaders in Eurasia, he wished to control the story of the Mongols' rise and fall. The Ming court understood that the Yuan court on the steppe was connected to Besh-baliq and merchants from Samarqand.[95]

[93] *DMTZ*, 7.64b, vol. 2, pp. 282–83; *MTZSL*, 212.1a–b, pp. 3141–42.
[94] For a slightly dated English translation of this edict, see Bretschneider, *Mediæval Researches*, vol. 2, pp. 237–38.
[95] In a 1397 edict to Khiżr Khwāja, Zhu Yuanzhang noted that Samarqand merchants traveled to the steppe. See *MTZSL*, 249.4b, p. 3612.

It was not enough to remind, however obliquely, Khiżr Khwāja about the Ming military triumph at Buir Lake. Nor did it suffice to highlight that large numbers of the Chinggisid nobility and their followers surrendered to the Ming throne. Zhu Yuanzhang insisted on interpreting these events in terms of a wider narrative of irreversible Chinggisid failure and decisive Ming victory, neither of which might contemporary political leaders contest.[96] Zhu Yuanzhang had assigned a Mongolian prince to escort the merchants home, another display of the Ming court's ability to win Chinggisid nobles' allegiance. Khiżr Khwāja then dispatched the same Tatar prince as his envoy to the Ming court, perhaps his own assertion of sovereignty.[97]

Whatever Zhu Yuanzhang's claims, Khiżr Khwāja and his supporters did not feel that Chinggisid fortunes were over. As noted, Khiżr Khwāja's enthronement was seen in some quarters as ushering in a Mongol revival. No evidence suggests that the Moghul khanate believed that the Ming dynasty had replaced the Great Yuan. In fact, there is a strong possibility that at least some political elites in the Moghul khanate simply added the Ming emperor to the coterie of powerful men in the world. Late in 1388, two Moghul tribal leaders sent a letter to Zhu Yuanzhang requesting that he facilitate the journey of a Chaghadaid nobleman, Gunashiri, from Qara-Qorum to Besh-baliq via the Central Asian oasis city of Hami. Why? The Moghul khanate faced an impending, full-scale attack by Tamerlane. Lacking a Chinggisid khan, the leading Moghul lineages remained divided and thus unprepared to meet the challenge. The answer was to find a Chinggisid noble. Tamerlane smashed the Moghul forces. The two leaders who had tried to enthrone Gunashiri were toppled. Faced with this new geopolitical reality, Gunashiri settled in Hami, where he founded a new kingdom. Another Chinggisid noble, the very same Khiżr Khwāja discussed earlier, was found and made khan. He maintained power by submitting to Tamerlane.[98]

The entire episode neatly illustrates how Chinggisid charisma was a resource to be exploited, whether by Moghul leaders hoping to stave off invasion or by Tamerlane wishing to further bolster his status as a great ruler. In this view, Zhu Yuanzhang's emergence as emperor of a new dynasty did not mean the disappearance of the Chinggisids as the gold standard of sovereigns.

[96] Although the communications with Besh-baliq preserved in the *Veritable Records* of Zhu Yuanzhang's reign clearly situate the Moghul khanate in a Chinggisid world, not until a 1402 entry of the *Ming Veritable Records* is Khiżr Khwāja explicitly identified as "a descendant of the Chinggisids." See *Ming Taizong shilu*, 15.1b, p. 270.

[97] Kauz, *Politik und Handel*, p. 60.

[98] The discussion of the Moghul tribal leaders' letter to Zhu Yuanzhang is based on Kim Hodong's brilliant analysis, "Hwa'i yŏk'ŏ ŭi 'Napmun pumasŏ'"; "Early History of the Moghul Nomads."

We get some sense of this from an incident in 1397. That year, Khiżr Khwāja detained a Ming envoy. Zhu Yuanzhang adopted the aggrieved tone of one who had done so much for merchants and the rulers of Central Asia but now suffered indignity at Khiżr Khwāja's hand.[99] The Ming emperor's Chinggisid narrative had failed to convince his Moghul audience.

[99] *DMTZ*, 7.2.284–85; *MTZSL*, 249.5a, p. 3617.

Part IV

East Asia

10 Eastern Neighbors

This chapter examines the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative in relations with the ruling elites of its eastern neighbors. Korea, Japan, and Vietnam are often categorized as countries whose long-term political, economic, military, and cultural interactions with China and to a lesser degree with each other, constitute a distinct region, East Asia. Studies of foreign relations prior to 1900 (especially the period from 1368 to 1900) often highlight their common commitment to Confucian ideals, most especially the notion of a regional hierarchy centered on China, which was ruled by the Son of Heaven. This shared perspective or set of values, it is sometimes argued, differed fundamentally from Western Europe during these centuries where struggle for primacy among Westphalian equals fostered competition, innovation, and warfare, among other things.[1]

Rather than pursue East-West or Confucian-Westphalian contrasts, this chapter explores how the Mongol empire, or more narrowly the Great Yuan, served as a shared reference point for the ruling elites of East Asia. To be more precise, it examines the diverse ways the early Ming court invoked the Great Yuan in relations with its eastern neighbors. Variation resulted from several factors. First, each country had experienced the Mongol empire or Yuan dynasty in a markedly different way. Second, each developed its own distinctive relation to the Ming court. Third, the Ming court's own interests in and level of understanding of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam varied. Finally, the surviving corpus of information available for each is dissimilar. To better appreciate why the Ming court highlighted particular facets of its Chinggisid narrative with each country, this chapter offers a bit of historical contextualization about the experiences of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam with the Mongol empire and the historical memory they formed of the Mongols in general and Yuan dynasty in particular. It also briefly notes a few pressing security and diplomacy concerns that informed the Ming court's efforts. As in other chapters, I argue that integral

[1] Kang, *East Asia*.

to Zhu Yuanzhang's campaigns of persuasion was the collection and use of information about neighbors' contemporary conditions.

Land of Rites and Righteousness and Chinggisid In-Law Kingdom: Koryŏ

Winning the recognition and allegiance of the kingdom of Koryŏ was critical for the early Ming court to establish legitimacy and security in East Asia. The Mongols had subjugated Koryŏ in the mid-thirteenth century after decades of destructive fighting on the peninsula.[2] Subsequently, the Mongol and Korean ruling houses formed a multigenerational marriage alliance, which did much to integrate Koryŏ into the Mongol empire.[3] From the 1270s to the 1350s, the Koryŏ ruling house adopted many elements of Mongolian political culture, including Mongolian language nomenclature for units in the personal guards of the king and heir apparent, palace guards, royal falconers, royal attendants, and retainers within the Mongolian princesses' entourage, among others.[4] At the same time, for centuries the polities and cultures of the Korean peninsula had been closely intertwined with dynasties based in China.[5] Thus, in the late fourteenth century, Koryŏ was perceived as both "a land of ritual and righteousness," that is, firmly within the Sinitic cultural sphere, and simultaneously a Chinggisid son-in-law kingdom intimately tied to the Great Yuan. To advance both its security and political legitimacy, the fledgling Ming court wanted the Koryŏ king's formal and exclusive recognition. Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang and his ministers addressed both facets of the Koryŏ court's dual identity.

During the thirteenth century, the Chinggisid ruling house extended its rule to Korea not merely on the basis of military strength but also through partial control of key elements of Koryŏ governance.[6] As a result it exercised a strong and sometimes decisive influence on Koryŏ's military, economic, personnel, and even religious resources. It figured directly and indirectly in the enthroning and dethroning of several Koryŏ kings.[7] For more than a century, members of the ruling houses, senior officials, envoys, translators, scholars, palace eunuchs, palace women, senior officials, and merchants traveled between Kaegyŏng and Daidu.[8] Both the Yuan and Koryŏ ruling houses attempted to mobilize these networks to their advantage through formal and informal demands, negotiations, and information gathering. The scale and

[2] Henthorn, *Korea*. [3] Morihira, *Mongoru hakenka*, pp. 22–201.
[4] Pelliot, "Les mots"; Kim Taemyŏng, "Koryŏ hugi," pp. 100–6.
[5] Pak Jae Woo, "Early Koryŏ Political Institutions."
[6] The following draws from Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 46–60; "Korea."
[7] Kim Tangt'aek, *Wŏn kansŏpha*. [8] Chang Tong'ik, *Koryŏ hugi*.

density of this network of public and private, official and unofficial relations prevented any one person or polity from exclusive exercise of power and influence. It, however, represented a formidable asset for those who could wield it effectively. The key point here is that through these institutional and personal ties, the Great Yuan became an essential feature of much of Koryŏ political, military, cultural, economic, and religious life.

Koryŏ's sovereign when Zhu Yuanzhang came to power was King Kongmin (1330–74, r. 1351–74). He had spent part of his youth as a member of the Great Khan's personal bodyguard, the *keshig*, in Daidu, adopted a Mongolian name, Bayan-Temür, and married a Chinggisid princess.[9] One of the few extant examples of a painting attributed to King Kongmin is *Great Hunt on Heavenly Mountain* (*Ch'ŏnsan taeyŏpto*). Only a fragment survives. It depicts two riders galloping on ponies. The better preserved figure is shown with the shaved pate and braided locks common among Mongolian men. He wears a close-fitting robe with narrow sleeves. A hunting raptor appears to rest on his right shoulder. Aristocratic hunting had a tradition on the Korean peninsula that long predated the Mongol period, but the rider's appearance suggests that the painting was informed by contemporary practice. King Kongmin was depicting a central element of Mongolian political culture, the royal hunt.[10] As a member of the extended Yuan imperial house and the Eurasian ruling elite, he understood its importance from firsthand experience.

Intimate ties led to complex relations. In 1356, five years after taking the Koryŏ throne, King Kongmin made an audacious bid to expand his power by purging rivals within his kingdom. Most of them had risen to power through connections to the Great Yuan, the same Great Yuan that had put King Kongmin on the throne. He also seized control of relay stations, the Mongols' sinews of empire, along the northern edge of his territory. He went so far as to abolish use of the Yuan calendar, an unequivocal rejection of political authority.[11] King Kongmin eventually yielded in the face of Great Yuan threats, but he had exposed the limitations of Chinggisid power. Despite such conflicts, during the last decade that Toghan-Temür ruled from Daidu, the Koryŏ dynasty, including its armies, had been among the Yuan dynasty's staunchest allies, dispatching troops to fight rebels in China.[12] Facing a threat to his throne in 1363, King Kongmin sought aid from the Yuan dynastic house by explicitly appealing to family ties.[13] The king also reminded the Yuan court that during the late 1350s and early 1360s, Koryŏ had willingly endured great

[9] Yun Ŭnsuk, "Yŏ-Mong kwan'gye," p. 121. [10] Allsen, *Royal Hunt*.
[11] Min Hyŏn'gu, *Koryŏ chŏngch'isa*, pp. 292–324.
[12] Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 114–16.
[13] *KS*, 40.3.1259. For the coup, see Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 220–51.

sacrifices during fighting against invading Red Turban forces to shore up Toghan-Temür's eastern flank.[14]

When Daidu fell and Zhu Yuanzhang sent formal announcement of the Ming dynasty's founding, King Kongmin and his court confronted momentous decisions about where their interests might lay in the future. King Kongmin moved quickly to recognize Zhu Yuanzhang as the Central Plains' new master. He did not, however, sever ties with the Great Yuan, which regularly sent envoys and gifts to Kaegyŏng. In 1369, King Kongmin accepted the title "Minister of the Right" from the Great Khan, who by then had retreated to the steppe.[15]

In his letter of thanks, King Kongmin offers both assurance of Koryŏ's unwavering allegiance and confidence in the Great Yuan's ability to achieve a dynastic revival. The following excerpt from King Kongmin's correspondence captures a sense of his emotional and military commitment to the Great Yuan house.

> Your minister humbly observes that granting appanages and establishing the eldest [son] is comparable to the heart and stomach's dependence on the arms and legs. Giving vent to resentment on behalf of one's ruler and assisting one's lord is like the hands and feet protecting the head and eyes. This is a great principle common to antiquity and today. This truly is the most genuine sentiment shared by superiors and subordinates. Someone like your minister is a son-in-law and has gratefully succeeded to investiture titles. I am chagrined that I offered not the slightest assistance when the emperor's armies were achieving victory after victory in the southern lands. At the time, the dragon chariot traveled on winter patrol to the Upper Capital. This is truly not to shirk from imperiling one's life. When I consider that Fang Shu and Shao Hu revived the Zhou ruling house and that Guo Ziyi and Li Guangbi restored the Tang ruling house, I did not dare to lag behind in submitting a memorial to offer troops. We flew to deliver fodder and grain. How great are your hardships![16]

King Kongmin discreetly describes Toghan-Temür's loss of Daidu and retreat to the steppe as "a winter patrol to the Upper Capital," that is, Shangdu. The king notes with regret that he failed to send troops to assist Toghan-Temür in his time of need. He draws attention, however, to his delivery of grain. He expresses sympathy for the Great Khan's duress and admiration for his bravery. The king also flatteringly places the Great Yuan in the august company of two of the most illustrious dynasties in East Asian history, the Zhou and Tang dynasties.

[14] Yi Saek, *Mok-ŭn mungo*, 11.1a–b, rpt. in *HGMJ*, vol. 5, p. 89; *HGYT*, vol. 20, pt. 6, pp. 210–11; *KS*, 40.3.1248; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 224–26; Yi Myŏngmi, "Ki Hwanghu."

[15] *KS*, 41.3.1284.

[16] Yi Saek, *Mok-ŭn mungo*, 11.2a, rpt. in *HGMJ*, vol. 5, p. 89; *HGYT*, vol. 20, p. 212; *KS*, 41.3.1284.

The Great Yuan similarly drew on family ties and shared history to demand the Koryŏ court's aid in times of need. In the weeks and months following the Great Khan's flight from Daidu to the north, he repeatedly ordered King Kongmin to send troops and supplies. In 1372, the new Great Khan – who was surely aware that the Koryŏ court had accepted Ming investiture – reminded King Kongmin of their family history. He observed, "You, the king, are also a descendant of Shizu of the Yuan (Qubilai). You should contribute your strength to rectifying the realm."[17]

In 1374 King Kongmin's successor (King U) transferred his allegiance to the Yuan court on the steppe. His court accepted seals, investiture, and honorary titles from the Great Khan. The two courts regularly exchanged gifts and envoys. For more than a decade, factions at the Koryŏ court debated the relative advantages of ties with the Great Ming or the Great Yuan. Relations between the Ming and Koryŏ ruling houses shifted again in the late 1380s, when Ming armies neutralized the most powerful Yuan commander in northeast Asia, Naghachu, much diminishing the viability of continued ties with the Great Yuan.[18] Shortly later, the Koryŏ dynasty fell, and its successor the Chosŏn dynasty began its own uneasy relations with the Ming court.[19]

Ties to the Chinggisid, both past and present, figured regularly in communications between Nanjing and Kaegyŏng.[20] The dense pattern of family ties, joint military efforts, and sustained bonds of service and loyalty between the ruling Koryŏ and Yuan houses meant that the evolving Chinggisid narrative of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors would figure prominently in efforts to persuade King Kongmin and his successors to accept the Ming court's vision of the past, present, and future. Zhu Yuanzhang needed to demonstrate his legitimacy and viability as a ruler. He worked hard to convince King Kongmin and his court that abandoning an alliance of nearly a century was not only expedient but also justified. Zhu Yuanzhang thus needed to address a wide range of issues, from military exigency, dynastic security, and political status to the ruler's virtue, Heaven's wishes, and proper respect for the fallen Yuan house.

In early communications with the Koryŏ, Zhu Yuanzhang addressed Yuan rule in several ways. In an early 1369 letter announcing the Ming dynasty's establishment, Zhu Yuanzhang contextualized his rise.

[17] *KS*, 44.3.1327; *KSCY*, 29.21b, vol. 1, p. 741. [18] Robinson, "Rethinking the Late Koryŏ."
[19] Pak Wŏnho, *Myŏng-ch'o Chosŏn*.
[20] Zhu Yuanzhang seldom openly criticized the Koryŏ court's ongoing relations with the Great Yuan. Fuma Susumu ("Min Shin Chūgoku no taiChōsen," pp. 315–25, esp. p. 317) suggests Zhu Yuanzhang's reluctance grew from fear that an open accusation would prompt the Koryŏ court to offer a justification or denial, which in turn would undermine the gravitas of an announcement from the Ming throne. Instead, Zhu Yuanzhang registered his displeasure through tirades against what he insisted were violations of ritual propriety and good faith.

Since the Song lost control and Heaven severed its sacrifices, Yuan, which is not of our kind, entered and ruled China for more than a century. Heaven detested its villainy and severed its life.[21]

Later in the same announcement, Zhu Yuanzhang briefly recounts his victories over Chen Youliang, Zhang Shicheng, and regional forces in southeastern China before returning to the Great Yuan. "Having driven northward the northern horsemen ruler," the new emperor writes, "we brought peace and tranquility to China and restored the former territories of Our China."[22] Zhu Yuanzhang places the Great Yuan's rise in a broader pattern of dynastic transitions, but he simultaneously highlights the Yuan/Chinggisids as a foreign regime. He repeatedly contrasts the Yuan ruling house with Our China.

One wonders how such a tone struck Koryŏ observers. For many educated men of the day, the Great Yuan was no longer a barbarian invader but a fully legitimate regime committed to support of classical scholarship, proper morality, and embrace of men of talent regardless of their place of origin.[23] They praised the Great Yuan's military strength, unprecedented scale, economic prosperity, and cultural fluorescence. They studied classical texts endorsed by the Great Yuan state and emulated essays written for the dynasty's government service examinations.[24] Some participated in that same examination system; a handful even took up posts within the Great Yuan administrative system. Koryŏ men of letters and officials like Yi Chehyŏn (1287–1367) combined service to the Koryŏ ruling house in Daidu with full embrace of cultural and religious life available in the Great Yuan.[25] Yet, in the late fourteenth century, other voices were audible. By the mid-1370s, prominent Koryŏ ministers would be raising sharp questions about the Great Yuan's status, although such criticisms used the language of a fallen regime abandoned by Heaven rather than a barbarian invader hostile to Chinese culture.[26] It is unclear whether challenges to Great Yuan political legitimacy reflected shifting geopolitical fortunes, enduring but minority doubts about the Mongols, or some combination of the two.

Eight months later in 1369, Zhu sent a gold seal and letter patent to King Kongmin. In an accompanying edict, Zhu Yuanzhang describes the chaos ensuing from the "Yuan's loss of control" – warfare, loss of territorial integrity, and human suffering. He also expresses hope of harmonious relations with the Koryŏ court. The Ming emperor ordered that King Kongmin was to

[21] *DMTZ*, 7.29b, vol. 2, p. 212; *KS*, 41.3.1285; *KSCY*, 28.39b, p. 728; *MTZSL*, 37.22a, pp. 749–50.
[22] *DMTZ*, 7.29b, vol. 2, p. 212; *KS*, 41.3.1285; *KSCY*, 28.40a, p. 728; *MTZSL*, 37.22b, p. 750.
[23] To Hyŏnch'ŏl, "Koryŏ malgi sadaebu."
[24] Do Hyeon-chol, "Analysis."
[25] Kin Bunkyō, "Kōrai no bunjin kanryō."
[26] Chŏng Mongju, *P'oŭn chip*, 3. 4b–6a, (vol. 5, pp. 600–1); *KS* 117.9.3574; *KSCY*, 30.4b–6a, pp. 750–51.

"succeed to previous titles in orders, follow its native customs in protocol, and observe established regulations in its standards."[27] The king would have immediately grasped his point. Zhu Yuanzhang was responding to the Koryŏ court's relationship with the Great Yuan. Qubilai had used nearly identical language about following native customs when he outlined the Koryŏ dynasty's place in the Mongol empire. Debates arose periodically about how closely to align Koryŏ institutions, protocol, law, and customs with those of the Daidu court. However, the Great Yuan never sought to impose anything like complete harmonization on the Koryŏ dynasty.[28] In essence, Zhu Yuanzhang offers the same arrangement.[29]

In communication with King Kongmin, Zhu Yuanzhang frequently refers to geopolitical consequences of the Great Yuan's collapse that posed security and diplomatic concerns to the Ming and Koryŏ courts. Such issues include the repatriation of Koryŏ subjects in Ming territory, the activities of relatives and supporters of Empress Ki, the Koryŏ court's relations with the Great Yuan court and its principal allies, Ming demands for Koryŏ eunuchs and virgin girls for the palace (a practice that coalesced in Daidu in the early to mid-fourteenth century), and influence over Jurchen populations that had been under loose Yuan control. Rather than attempt a comprehensive analysis of these questions, the following section briefly examines just two examples of how Zhu Yuanzhang chose to address the impact of the Great Yuan's collapse in his own relations with the Koryŏ dynasty. The first issue is conditions in Liaodong. The second issue is the fate of Tamma Island (today's Cheju Island) and its large Mongolian population.

Corresponding roughly to today's Liaoning Province, Liaodong in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was a strategically vital area.[30] Early in the thirteenth century, the Mongols, through conquest or co-option of both the Jurchen Jin dynasty and a series of smaller regional polities, established control of Liaodong. As was true in Yunnan, Qara-Qoto, and elsewhere in eastern Eurasia, the Mongols established an interlocking set of governing institutions including Chinggisid appanages, branch secretariats, and military

[27] *DMTZ*, 2.18a, vol. 1, pp. 269; *MTZSL*, 44.5b, p. 866. *KS*, 42.3.1295; *KSCY*, 29.3b, p. 732.

[28] Kim Hodong, *Mong'gol che'guk*, pp. 92–101. See also Yi Ikchu, "Koryŏ–Wŏn kwan'gye ŭi kojo."

[29] Zhu Yuanzhang offered other arrangements, perhaps most strikingly intermarriage between the Ming and Chosŏn ruling houses, which resembled those developed between the Koryŏ and Yuan courts. See *CWS*, 9.9a, 1.93 (*Annals*, p. 589); 9.9b, 1.93 (*Annals*, p. 590); 9.10a, 1.93 (*Annals*, p. 591); 10.8b, 1.97 (*Annals*, p. 620); 11.4b, 1.101 (*Annals*, 645); 11.9b, 1.103 (*Annals*, 662–64, 666). The Great Yuan precedent is not mentioned in the coy negotiations that unfolded in the months following Zhu Yuanzhang's original overture, but both sides likely had it in mind.

[30] The following paragraphs draw from Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 22–46; "Korea."

units that incorporated subjugated local populations. In the mid-thirteenth century, large communities of former Koryŏ subjects relocated, either under coercion or voluntarily, to Liaodong where they were governed by former Koryŏ military commanders or members of the Koryŏ ruling family who had transferred their allegiance to the Mongols.[31]

In the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Liaodong remained of keen interest to the Koryŏ throne. In large part this was because Liaodong posed a potential threat to the Koryŏ ruling family's authority and influence. Liaodong was home to some of the Mongol empire's most prestigious Chinggisid nobles, notably descendants of Chinggis Khan's younger brothers. Several extended their influence into Koryŏ territory to pursue economic interests. The substantial (and growing) Koryŏ population was beyond the control of the Koryŏ throne. It not only made clear the limitations of royal authority but also served as a potential base to challenge the reigning king.

As Great Yuan power deteriorated in the second half of the fourteenth century, Liaodong's strategic significance only increased. As noted, when in 1356, King Kongmin sought to consolidate royal power, he struck military targets in southeastern Liaodong along the Yalu River. In the late 1350s, Chinese Red Turban rebel armies had marched first into Liaodong and then into Koryŏ, briefly occupying both the northern and main capitals.[32] When the Great Yuan considered replacing King Kongmin in 1364, it massed an army just north of the Yalu River before beginning an abortive drive to Kaegyŏng. In 1370, King Kongmin launched a strike against a main city in Liaodong (Liaoyang) in the name of eradicating political enemies based there. In 1379, rumors swirled that a joint Great Yuan-Koryŏ attack on Liaodong was imminent.[33] Later in the 1380s, the Koryŏ considered a major campaign into Liaodong. It became the immediate impetus to Yi Sŏnggye's decision to rebel, which in turn led to the Chosŏn dynasty's founding a few years later in 1392. Finally, throughout these decades, Korean and Chinese populations crossed the Yalu River in both directions as they variously sought to escape war and instability, follow family members, or pursue individual advantages and opportunities. Increasing Liaodong's volatility was Zhu Yuanzhang's belief that the Ming dynasty was the rightful successor to the Great Yuan in Liaodong. From 1368 onward, the Ming state steadily expanded its control in Liaodong through the establishment of nearly two dozen military garrisons. In a word, Liaodong was of common strategic interest to both the Ming and Koryŏ courts, a subject of frequent confrontation, and closely linked to the legacy of the Great Yuan.

[31] Yang Ŭisik, "Wŏn kansŏpgi"; Kim Kujin, "Wŏndae Yodong."
[32] On the Red Turbans in Liaodong and Koryŏ, see Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 130–84.
[33] *KS*, 134.10.4023.

Late in 1369, Zhu Yuanzhang observed:

> Today, the northern horsemen's fortune has ended. The people of the steppe and borders cannot be governed immediately, but Our troops have not yet arrived in the Liaoyang and Shenyang region. Cruel, violent men may appear there. It is not a calamity for China but is bound to be trouble for Koryŏ. Further, Japanese villains have been active among the coastal islands for more than a decade. How could they not be completely apprised of the king's strengths and weaknesses? These are all matters that cannot but cause concern.[34]

In this communication to the Koryŏ throne, Zhu Yuanzhang may insist that "the northern horsemen's fortune has ended," but he understood that King Kongmin's court remained closely tied to the Great Yuan.[35] He knew, for instance, that King Kongmin had not yet adopted the Ming dynasty's calendar.[36] Zhu Yuanzhang depicts the region of Liaoyang and Shenyang as a state of anarchy with no effective rule, at least until his troops can arrive to take control. Zhu Yuanzhang understood that Naghachu remained the most important regional player in Liaodong. He was also clear that Naghachu was closely allied with the Great Yuan and actively pursued ties with the Koryŏ dynasty. Zhu Yuanzhang, however, omits those facts to portray the unsettled Liaodong region as a security risk to King Kongmin that grew out of the Great Yuan's collapse. The rise of Japanese piracy too owed something to faltering Yuan governance since the mid-fourteenth century.[37] All in all, Zhu Yuanzhang foregrounds specific ways the Great Yuan's demise undermined Koryŏ dynastic security and increased King Kongmin's need for amicable relations with the Great Ming.

A few years later, Zhu Yuanzhang addressed another consequence of the sudden collapse of Great Yuan power, volatile relations between the Koryŏ court and the sizeable Mongol population living on Tamma Island. Tamma Island's strategic value had come to Qubilai's attention as early as 1268 as he mulled over plans for Japan. Its importance was confirmed when some Koryŏ military units refused to accept the king's decision to submit to the Mongols. Instead, they rebelled.[38] One of their principal bases was Tamma Island, from which they could threaten travel lanes between Korea and Japan. Following the resistance movement's suppression, Qubilai established a long-term military

[34] *DMTZ*, 7.32a–b, vol. 2, pp. 217–18; *KS*, 42.3.1296; *KSCY*, 29.5a, p. 733; *MTZSL*, 46.1b, p. 908.

[35] A long edict from 1373 preserved in its original vernacular form gives an excellent sense of the many ways that Koryŏ's ties to the Great Yuan and its personnel unsettled Zhu Yuanzhang. See *KS*, 44.3.1330–35.

[36] The adoption of the Hongwu reign title appears in an entry for July 31, 1370 in *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*. See *KS*, 42.3.1301. See also *KSCY*, 29.6a, p. 733.

[37] However, as this chapter will show, the roots of piracy should be sought in Japan.

[38] This was the Three Extraordinary Watches (*Sambyŏlch'o*) regime. See Yoon, "Focal Issues"; Breuker, "Your Highness," pp. 86–95; Murai, *Ajia no naka*, pp. 143–69.

presence on the island. For the next quarter century, Tamma Island was administered directly by the Great Yuan. Qubilai ordered that a contingent of more than 1,000 soldiers be stationed on the island. He also dispatched several hundred Mongolian horse breeders. In principal, Tamma Island was returned to control of the Koryŏ throne soon after Qubilai's death in 1293. In reality, it remained largely outside Koryŏ dynastic administration for much of the next century.[39]

By the mid-fourteenth century, Tamma Island had changed. Horse breeding supplanted farming and fishing as the island's principal economic activity. The island delivered horses to the Koryŏ and Yuan dynasty on an annual basis. Some horses were gifts to the throne. Others were economic commodities that generated wealth.[40] The horse trade and other links to Kaegyŏng and Daidu facilitated the flow of culture to Tamma. At the same time, the Mongolian enclave's population grew to as many as 30,000 people. In the last years of his reign from Daidu, Toghan-Temür ordered the construction of a palace on Tamma. His motives are unclear. One scholar suggests that he envisioned Tamma as a refuge where a Great Khan could enjoy the amenities of the empire surrounded by a large and loyal Mongolian community, a stark contrast with internecine court intrigue and spreading pestilence in the capital.[41]

Thus, while Tamma Island might seem on first blush a peripheral issue, for contemporaries it was bound up with Qubilai's legacy, the Mongolian diaspora, Koryŏ royal authority, and, as the following shows, the new Ming court's emerging role in East Asia. In 1370, King Kongmin requested that the Ming dynasty offer a display of force to intimidate the Mongols, who were now ostensibly Koryŏ subjects. The goal was to induce them to submit tribute in particular and to obey the king's commands more generally. The Koryŏ court insisted that the Tamma Mongols were linked to the political conspiracy of the brothers of Empress Ki, Toghan-Temür Korean-born wife who was mother to Ayushiridara.[42] In other words, the king and his advisors were attempting to turn Zhu Yuanzhang's concerns about the Great Yuan to their own advantage. The same envoy mission that delivered their appeal for Ming assistance in Tamma also presented a golden seal previously issued to the Koryŏ by the Great Yuan, tangible evidence of King Kongmin's good faith and loyalty.[43] Later, the Koryŏ court claimed that Tamma Mongols murdered several Koryŏ officials sent to supervise the collection of horses for tribute to the Ming court. The Mongols also killed more than 300 armed guards sent to protect the tribute horses from Japan pirates.[44]

[39] Ikeuchi, "Gen no Seiso"; Kang Man'ik, "Koryŏmal T'amma mokchang."
[40] In 1397, Kwŏn Kŭn composed a poem about Tamma by order of Zhu Yuanzhang. It refers to the island's economic prosperity and the flow of merchant ships to and from the island. See *Annals*, p. 652.
[41] Yun Ŭnsuk, "Wŏnmal T'ogon T'emuŭr k'an." [42] *KS*, 42.3.1303–4. [43] *KS*, 42.3.1302.
[44] *KS*, 43.3.1320.

Zhu Yuanzhang declined the request to intervene. He argued that empty threats would only incite violence. Instead, he counseled Kong Kongmin to follow the Daoist adage that "ruling a great country is like cooking a small fish," that is, a minimalist approach was likeliest to yield the best results.[45] Zhu Yuanzhang explained, "These Tamma herders are Tatars of the Yuan dynasty. They originally made their living by herding and raising livestock. They can't do anything else. Families with farms have also been accumulating land for years." He warned that because the Mongols had murdered Koryŏ officials in the past, if the Koryŏ government took overly aggressive measures, the Mongols would strike out in fear. They might even ally with the Japanese or Jurchens. He expressed anger at the Mongols' massacre of Koryŏ personnel. However, he instructed King Kongmin to deliberate carefully before taking any military action that might precipitate even more serious problems.[46]

The Ming court tried to use the connection between Tamma and the House of Qubilai to pursue its own interests. In 1374, the Ming court sought ways to replace horses lost in previous military clashes with the Great Yuan on the steppe. "Now the great army again advances on campaign," Zhu Yuanzhang wrote to King Kongmin. The emperor continued, "I believe that the kingdom of Koryŏ already has twenty or thirty thousand horses on Tamma where they were previously raised for the former Yuan dynasty." He instructed the king to deliver 2,000 good quality horses.[47] Left unsaid was that horses supplied to the Great Ming were horses that could not be given to the Great Yuan. Mongols on Tamma refused to turn over 2,000 horses. One Mongol official asked, "How would I dare present horses raised for Emperor Shizu (Qubilai) to the Great Ming?" Instead, 300 horses were delivered.[48]

In the name of reuniting Mongol families, beginning no later than 1382, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the relocation of an unspecified number of Chinggisid nobles in Ming territory to Tamma Island.[49] Exiling important political figures to Tamma grew from Chinggisid precedents of sending nobles and others to Koryŏ's coastal island.[50] His 1388 edict to the Koryŏ king does not appear in the *Ming Veritable Records*. Zhu Yuanzhang wrote:

> Now the Yuan/Chinggisid progeny who come in submission are legion. We absolutely will not extirpate the Yuan descendants. We will settle the princes on [Tamma Island]. We will station several tens of thousands of troops to protect them and issue grain from

[45] *DMTZ*, 7. 33a–b, vol. 2, pp. 219–20; *MTZSL*, 75.2a, pp. 1385–86.
[46] *KS*, 43.3.1324–25; *KSCY*, 29.19b, p. 740. [47] *KS*, 44.3.1344. [48] *KS*, 44.3.1347–48.
[49] *MTZSL*, 144.2a, p. 2263; 196.2a, p. 2943; 203.2a, p. 3171. See Pae Sukhŭi, "Wŏnmal Myŏngch'o"; Serruys, *Mongols in China*, pp. 294–99.
[50] The Chinggisids used at least eight such islands. See Ye, *Mingdai qianqi*, pp. 5–6. In his youth, Toghan-Temür had been exiled to one of these islands. Zhu Yuanzhang also wished to send prominent political prisoners there, including family members of men who had established political regimes in the late Yuan period like Chen Youliang and Ming Yuzhen.

the region of Liangzhe to support them in order to preserve descendants of the Yuan. Is it not appropriate to arrange that the Chinggisid/Yuan descendants be leisurely and carefree amidst the sea?[51]

Zhu Yuanzhang here acts as the Chinggisid nobility's special patron. He vows to protect and feed them in a place where they can "be leisurely and carefree." At the same time, he imposes his will on the Koryŏ throne, to which, as he had previously acknowledged, these lands and their people belonged. Especially striking is Zhu Yuanzhang's intention to station tens of thousands of troops on Tamma. Such a commitment would have meant the creation of at least two full Ming garrisons. Given that military garrisons were often the first step in establishing lasting Ming control in new territory – something that contemporary observers would have witnessed in Liaodong – one can only wonder about the reaction of King U and his advisors to the news. There is no evidence that Zhu Yuanzhang ever followed through on the plan to put soldiers on Tamma. The Ming emperor did, however, order the Koryŏ king to construct and pay for housing for more than eighty households of "Chinggisid princes of the blood" who had surrendered in the most recent Ming campaign on the steppe.[52] When in 1390 Zhu Yuanzhang wished to see one of the Prince of Liang's descendants who had been exiled to Tamma, he expected the Koryŏ throne to make him available. Before the Chinggisid prince departed for Nanjing, the reigning Koryŏ sovereign, King Kongyang (r. 1389–92), hosted a feast on his behalf in the royal palace.[53] Thus, while much of his rhetoric attempted either to put the Great Yuan in the past or push it to the margins, Zhu Yuanzhang knew that developments in the present keenly interested neighbors.

Before turning to Zhu Yuanzhang's sources of information about Korean perceptions of the Great Yuan, let us look briefly at one final way the Ming emperor used historical memory in his relations with the Koryŏ and Chosŏn courts. As noted, in 1374, King Kongmin was assassinated, and for next decade and more, the Koryŏ court cultivated relations with both the Great Yuan and Great Ming. In a 1377 edict to the Koryŏ king, Zhu Yuanzhang selectively reviews history from the Han dynasty to the recent past to illustrate his argument that Korea had repeatedly reneged on its vows of loyalty and obedience to China, usually with disastrous results for the ruling house.[54]

[51] *DMTZ*, 6.22a, vol. 2, p. 105; *KS*, 137.10.4135; *KSCY*, 33.24a, p. 828.
[52] *KS*, 137.10.4142. See also *MTZSL*, 196.2a, p. 2943. *The Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty* indicates that the Koryŏ king sent an official to Tamma to repair and build eighty-five buildings to house the Chinggisid nobles.
[53] *KS*, 45.4.1368; *KSCY*, 29.6b–7b, vol. 1, pp. 733–34.
[54] For a similar 1384 example, see *DMTZ*, 2.12a–13a, vol. 1, pp. 328–30; *MTZSL*, 162.2b–3a, pp. 2514–15. See also *KSCY*, 33.24a, p. 828; *CWJ*, 14.2b, 1.1222 (*Annals*, p. 782).

At the time of the rise of the Song, the Wang family ruled the country. It was pressured by the Kitans and Jurchens and willingly served as a slave. Shizu of the Yuan (Qubilai) entered the Central Plains. He rescued that country (Koryŏ) from the precipice of disaster but [it] unjustifiably harbored suspicions and grew disloyal. It murdered envoys. It repeatedly surrendered and rebelled and as a consequence repeatedly suffered the disasters of war.[55]

Here, Zhu Yuanzhang depicts Qubilai as a Central Plains ruler who saved Koryŏ from imminent demise but was repaid with treachery. Just a few lines later in the same edict, however, the Yuan ruling house is painted in markedly different colors. Zhu Yuanzhang remarks that he had pacified China and "driven out the northern horsemen caitiffs."[56] Similar observations often appear in efforts to coerce the Koryŏ and later Chosŏn court to comply to his wishes.

We arose in the region between the Yangzi and Huai Rivers to unite all quarters of the realm and drive out the northern horsemen caitiffs. Mounted archers and ship-borne forces were required for riverine and land battles. How could the Han and Tang dynasties compare with this? Now that the four quarters have been conquered, the armies of a hundred battles and the very finest of heroes have nowhere to display their valor. An army of a million soldiers in armor, an armada of ships extending for a thousand *li* advanced by sea from the Bohai Sea and overland through Liaoyang, would not even need to prepare a morning meal against tiny Chosŏn. How could you possibly stand in their way?[57]

Here Zhu Yuanzhang points out that his military campaigns against warlord forces and the "northern horsemen," that is, the Great Yuan, have thoroughly prepared him for any war. A campaign against the Chosŏn would be short work for him. Zhu Yuanzhang raised the threat of military action against the Koryŏ and Chosŏn some twenty times.[58] However, in contrast to the case of Japan discussed shortly, these threats do not highlight the Mongols' fighting prowess in particular.

The fluctuating focus owes much to two factors. First, Zhu Yuanzhang needed to justify his rebellion by dismissing the Great Yuan as a foreign ruling house. Second, he wanted to highlight his military prowess. Having defeated the Mongols, which had previously visited great destruction on Koryŏ, Zhu Yuanzhang's land and sea forces are now available to attack the peninsula if he so desires. Both invocations of the Great Yuan, as fully legitimate ruler of the Central Plains and foreign ruling house, were in service of Zhu Yuanzhang's immediate objectives, namely to force the Koryŏ court to abandon its renewed ties to the Great Yuan and to conform to the Great Ming's diplomatic

[55] *DMTZ*, 6.14a, vol. 2, p. 90; *MTZSL*, 116.7b, p. 1904; *KS*, 134.10.4025.
[56] 6.14b, vol. 2, p. 91; *MTZSL*, 116.8a, p. 1905.
[57] *MTZSL*, 228.3b, p. 3326.
[58] Wu Yue, "Waijiao linian," pp. 34–39; estimate of twenty appears on p. 53.

demands. Similarly, depending on the context, Zhu Yuanzhang either highlighted the historical distance of the Great Yuan's fall or stressed its immediate relevance for contemporaries. As the next section shows, Zhu Yuanzhang offered a similarly supple interpretation of the Great Yuan vis-à-vis Japanese authorities.

Before turning to Japan, however, let us briefly consider Zhu Yuanzhang's sources of information about Koryŏ and its experiences with the Great Yuan. First, the Great Yuan court's sudden collapse in 1368 stranded thousands of Koryŏ men and women in Daidu, Liaodong, and elsewhere. Several hundred Koryŏ palace women and palace eunuchs were seized in Daidu when Ming forces captured the Great Yuan capital. A portion was returned to the Koryŏ court, but many ended up in the new Ming dynasty's palace complexes.[59] These men and women were deeply familiar with the personal lives of the Great Yuan ruling elite through years of intimate service.[60] Given everything we know about Zhu Yuanzhang, it is hard to imagine that he did not talk to them. In correspondence with the Koryŏ throne, he noted the names of individual officials whose daughters had entered Yuan service. Second, Zhu Yuanzhang demanded eunuchs and women from Korea for his household.[61] His correspondence with Koryŏ and Chosŏn kings shows that he had a lively appreciation of eunuchs' ability to gather vital information, which he viewed as both an asset and a danger.[62] He wanted Korean eunuchs in his service as envoys to have maximum access to the king's palace.[63] In audiences, he quizzed Koryŏ and Chosŏn officials about border conditions, the capital, the king's household, recent and ancient history, their experiences in Ming territory, even marriage customs.[64] The Chosŏn founder worried aloud that Zhu

[59] Zhu Yuanzhang's earliest envoys to the Koryŏ court included former Great Yuan personnel, notably Korean-born palace eunuchs such as Kim Yŏyŏn. See *KS*, 41.3.1286. One palace woman of Korean birth captured by Ming troops and transferred to the Nanjing won Zhu Yuanzhang's affection. Her father, a Koryŏ official, later served on an envoy mission to the Ming dynasty. See *KS*, 44.3.1330.

[60] Pak Kyŏngja, "Kungnyŏ ch'ulsin"; Xi Lei, *Yuandai Gaoli gongnü*; Xi Lei and Temür Bagena, "Yuandai Gaoli gongnü"; Ko Hyeyŏng, "Pang Sin'u."

[61] For a 1391 order to the Koryŏ court for 200 eunuchs, see *MTZSL*, 208.1a, p. 3093; *KS*, 46.4.1383-84. Zhu Yuanzhang similarly demanded eunuchs from the Chosŏn court. See *CWJ*, 5.17a, 1.61 (*Annals*, p. 384).

[62] *CWJ*, 8.1a, 1.80 (*Annals*, p. 506); 11.9b, 1.103 (*Annals*, p. 665); *CWJ*, 14.13a, 1.127 (*Annals*, p. 808).

[63] *CWJ*, 9.9a, 1.93 (*Annals*, 589); 14.15b, 1.129 (*Annals*, 818). For Korean eunuchs who served as Ming imperial envoys to the Koryŏ and Chosŏn courts, see Tsai, *Eunuchs*, 135–40; Chan, "Mingchu Chaoxian."

[64] *CWJ*, 6.54a, 1.65 (*Annals*, p. 410). Topics that Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the Chosŏn official and envoy, Kwŏn Kŭn, to write about suggest the issues he found interesting. See *CWJ*, 11.4b, 1.101 (*Annals*, pp. 646–55). Zhu Yuanzhang gleaned enough information to compose his own poems on the Yalu River, the former Koryŏ capital (Kaegyŏng), and envoys' experience of passing through Liaodong.

Yuanzhang would extract information from his envoys about local conditions, including border defenses and roads, if war broke out.[65] Zhu Yuanzhang reviewed reports submitted from his envoys (eunuch and otherwise) upon their return from Korea. Further, he received regular reports from Liaodong authorities, whose duties included gathering information on conditions in Korea.[66] Former Great Yuan commanders with extensive prior experiences with the Koryŏ court, such as Gaojianu, who entered into Ming service, could also provide insights to Zhu Yuanzhang. Finally, the Ming emperor's most detailed source of Koryŏ's experiences with the Mongols was likely *The Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*, which officials like Song Lian had helped compile and which was available for Zhu Yuanzhang's review.

Zhu Yuanzhang wanted both to acquire and to transmit information. Previous chapters have noted that in 1370, a Ming army launched a successful attack on the Great Yuan court at Yingchang (Inner Mongolia). Zhu Yuanzhang soon sent an edict to King Kongmin. The Ming emperor related that his armies had captured large numbers of horses, sheep, and other livestock, that is, the economic assets of the Yuan court. Furthermore, his men had seized Ayushiridara's son, Maidaribala, his mother, several consorts, and scores of Mongol officials. Zhu Yuanzhang's multipoint edict to the Koryŏ court was intended for wide circulation outside Ming territory.[67]

Zhu Yuanzhang understood that the Koryŏ court retained its links to this varied audience. Thus, in the proclamation noted he included section after section related to the Chinggisids. Zhu Yuanzhang explicitly addresses several groups. They include "those in the entourage of the Yuan ruler who fled pell-mell," "the various princes of the northern regions and leaders of *aimag*s," and "the Tatar people of the northern regions." Zhu Yuanzhang expected that information relayed to the Koryŏ court would quickly make its way to the Great Yuan's key supporters. Zhu Yuanzhang exploited Koryŏ-Yuan ties to explain to northern audiences why he was forced to take up arms, indicate Zhu Yuanzhang's willingness to grant titles and posts to Chinggisid princes and commanders who join the Ming, detail the treatments of Chinggidisid noble, and express compassion for Mongol commoners who had suffered as a result of widespread warfare.

Japan

Zhu Yuanzhang tailored his Chinggisid narrative to contemporary Japanese perceptions. This might seem obvious, but scholarly consensus once held that

[65] *CWJ*, 14.2b, 1.22 (*Annals*, p. 784). [66] *CWJ*, 7.13a, 1.79 (*Annals*, p. 500).
[67] *KS*, 42.3.1304–6. See also *XLZC* (*MCKG*, vol. 4, pp. 1873–78); *MTZSL* 53.6b–7a, 53.7a–b, 53.7b–8b.

the Ming founder did not really understand conditions in Japan. He sent his envoys to the wrong part of the country based on outdated information; he confused a prince for the King of Japan; and he was unaware of a decades-old civil war.[68] The general image was of an ill-informed and frustrated emperor far out of his depth. Such a view owed much to the early Ming dynasty's strict regulation of foreign trade and diplomatic relations and its policies to eliminate unregulated, private contact with the outside world. How could the architect of such an inward-looking regime possess any real understanding of neighboring countries' political and military conditions, much less their historical memory?

This section shows that Zhu Yuanzhang was not only aware of conditions in Japan but also understood its experiences with the Mongol empire, at least their outlines. It further argues that the Ming emperor customized his Chinggisid narrative in light of contemporary Japanese developments and current perceptions of Qubilai's abortive campaigns against Japan. He drew on information supplied by Buddhist monks, traders, and envoys. Zhu Yuanzhang also availed himself of knowledge gleaned from the compilation of the *Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*.

Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to turn the Mongol legacy to his advantage in two major ways. First, he portrayed his defeat of the Great Yuan as evidence of his standing as a legitimate ruler. Second, he invoked Qubilai's abortive invasions of Japan to highlight his own military strength and possession of Heaven's Mandate. Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts did little to persuade the Ashikaga military government, the imperial court, regional leaders, or Buddhist monks to his view of history. His edicts do, however, show two things. First, he understood that experiences and perceptions of the Mongol empire varied throughout eastern Eurasia. Second, he tried to craft arguments compelling to specific audiences.

This section is organized into three parts. The first two parts examine political power, legitimacy, and memory of the Mongols in Japan to clarify the contemporary perceptions that Zhu Yuanzhang sought to address. Part one limns Japan's engagement with the continent during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with special attention to Mongols' abortive campaigns against Japan and their consequences, including the formation of memories of foreign invasion. Part two quickly relates key political and military developments in Japan during the late fourteenth century that shaped the early Ming court's strategies to achieve its most pressing goals. Having established some sense of Japanese perceptions of the Mongols and contemporary political dynamics, the remainder of the section examines Zhu Yuanzhang's communications to key Japanese political actors.

[68] Sakuma Shigeo, *Nichi Min*, pp. 54, 60; Zheng Liangsheng, *Min Nichi*, pp. 126, 132.

Continental Relations

Whatever previous information Japanese authorities may have commanded about the Mongols, beginning in 1268, they received direct communications from the Great Khan. In that year, Qubilai's envoys delivered the first of several rounds of promises of cordial relations and implicit threats of war to Japanese authorities.[69] In 1271, Korean military commanders leading a resistance movement against the Mongols sent a proposal to the Japanese imperial court for an alliance against Qubilai's armies.[70] The Japanese military government based in Kamakura rejected both sets of overtures. It instead prepared for war on its own. In 1274 and 1281, Qubilai's armadas attacked the Japanese western port of Hakata and outlying islands such as Tsushima and Iki.[71] Both ended in defeat.

The military government directed Japan's defensive efforts. It established a special military headquarters in Dazaifu, a key port city linking Japan to the continent and peninsula.[72] The military government not only ordered men under its direct command to ready for war. It also issued a call to arms throughout the country. Thus, regions and people far removed from the front felt the impact of war preparation. An expensive series of stone fortifications took form along the western coast where the Mongols were most likely to land.[73] At the same time, both Kamakura authorities and the imperial court in Kyoto mobilized the country's spiritual defenses. They sponsored prayers and rituals to defeat the Mongols. They also rewarded Buddhist and Shinto deities' contributions to the war. These efforts deeply influenced patronage ties among the throne, the military government, Buddhist monasteries, and Shinto temples.[74] For the next two decades, the Great Yuan court repeatedly prepared to renew war with Japan.[75] Japanese military mobilization lasted well into the early fourteenth century.

Put simply, this broad and extended war effort – it lasted for more than half a century – exercised a pervasive influence on Japan. Extending far beyond the imperial court, Kamakura leaders, and warriors, it touched men and women down to the village level.[76] In addition to its immediate military, economic,

[69] Chase, "Mongol Intentions towards Japan"; Ikeuchi, *Genkō*, vol. 1, pp. 29–47.
[70] Murai, *Ajia no naka*, pp. 143–69; Yoon, "Focal Issues"; Breuker, "Your Highness," pp. 86–95.
[71] Estimates of the armada's size vary greatly. Here I follow Sugiyama, "Mongoru jidai no Afuro-Yurashia," p. 134.
[72] Murai, *Ajia no naka*, pp. 189–226.
[73] Hori, "Economic and Political Effects"; Kawazoe and Hurst, "Japan and East Asia," pp. 419–22.
[74] Kaizu Ichirō, *Mōko shūrai*; Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, pp. 271–74.
[75] Ikeuchi, *Genkō*, vol. 1, pp. 377–437.
[76] Kaizu Ichirō, *Kamikaze to akutō*; *Mōko shūrai*. As a result of its efforts to coordinate Japan's defenses, the Kamakura military government greatly expanded its range of powers, which in

political, and social consequences, the Mongol invasions also inspired stories and lasting memories. They did not feature only accounts of the invaders' rapine and lingering fear of their reappearance. They also recounted the heroic contributions of men, women, and deities to the defense of local communities and Japan as a whole.

This interlude of military conflict and sense of crisis, however, was embedded in a longer period of deep Japanese engagement with the continent.[77] Before, during, and after the abortive invasions, the archipelago was linked to the Yuan dynasty through commercial, cultural, and religious ties, bringing news of developments under the Chinggisids to a portion of Japanese society.[78] Flourishing trade was spurred in part by strong demand for Chinese objects such as ceramics, paintings, books, and medicines. Contemporary Chan/Zen and Neo-Confucian thought and practices in China also held a strong appeal among Japanese religious communities, educated men, and at least one emperor.[79] These ties lead one influential Japanese scholar to conclude that many defining characteristics of Japan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries grew from interactions with the Mongol empire.[80]

Increasing instability in the Yuan dynasty during the 1350s and 1360s drove many to seek refuge in Hakata, Kyoto, and elsewhere, bringing up-to-date information about conditions in China. Some were Japanese monks returning home. Others were Chinese scholars, monks, and artisans. A portion cultivated ties with the Ashikaga military government.[81] Thus, when the Ming dynasty was founded in 1368, Japanese audiences had been observing the Mongol empire, most especially the Great Yuan, for nearly a century. Wide-ranging economic, cultural, and personal interaction contributed to a multifaceted view of the Mongol empire or, more narrowly, the Yuan dynasty.

How much did Zhu Yuanzhang know about the Japan of his day? Did he understand contemporary Japanese perceptions of the Mongol empire and of

turn increased its scope of legal and economic responsibilities. See Ishii Susumu, "Decline," pp. 131–48.

[77] Interest in continental culture continued, perhaps intensified, during the fifteenth century. Hashimoto Yū (*Chūka gensō*) speaks of Muromachi Japan's "China fantasy" *Chūka gensō*.

[78] Murai, "Mōko shūrai to ibunka sesshoku"; Saeki, "Nihon shinkō iko"; Kawazoe and Hurst, "Japan and East Asia," pp. 419–23; Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, pp. 83–105; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, pp. 259–62; Itō Kōji ("Higashi Ajia o matagu Zenshū"). As Kawazoe and Hurst ("Japan and East Asia," pp. 416–17) note, the flow of information was uneven, with more news about developments in southern China than northern China, and greater circulation among Japanese religious, merchant, and military circles than within the imperial court.

[79] Murai, "NichiGen kōtsū"; Saeki Kōji, "Trade Ceramics"; Goble, "Kajiwara Shōzen"; Wei Rongji, *Gen Nichi*, pp. 265–422.

[80] Sugiyama, *Dai Mongoru no jidai*, p. 273. On Japanese interest in contemporary Chinese culture, see Murai, "Wakō to 'Nihon kokuō'," pp. 12–13; "Nichi-Gen kōtsū," pp. 217–19, 253; *Nihon chūsei no ibunka sesshoku*, p. 209.

[81] Enomoto, "Genmatsu nairanki"; "Jūyon seiki kōhan."

his own regime? Scholars' evaluations vary. Here I argue that the Ming founder was aware of some major Japanese political developments and grasped key elements of Japanese views of the Mongols. What then were Zhu Yuanzhang's sources of information about Japan? Was his intelligence accurate, timely, and sensitive to local variation? My working hypothesis is that the Ming founder drew on the networks of people and information just outlined to pursue dynastic interests. It must be acknowledged at the outset, however, that the limitations of surviving sources make conclusive answers impossible.

Zhu Yuanzhang's knowledge of Japan's division into the so-called Northern and Southern courts, the importance of regional political actors, and memory of the Mongol invasions owed much to information he collected from Japanese monks.[82] Perhaps the most famous instance is the Ming founder's quizzing of the Japanese Rinzai monk Chintei Kaiju (1318–1410) about "imperial governance in the nearby and far-flung corners of Japan." "The emperor was delighted," reports Chintei's biographer, "and rewarded him most generously."[83] These few sentences, however, reveal no details of what Chintei told Zhu Yuanzhang about Japan. In 1376, Zhu Yuanzhang met the Japanese monks Zekkai Chūshin (1334–1405) and Nyoshō Ryōsa. They apparently discussed poetry. The Ming emperor likely also used the opportunity to inquire about conditions in Japan, but again such an inference remains speculative.[84] In 1374, seventy-one men, including the Japanese monk Sōgaku, arrived in Nanjing. Zhu Yuanzhang may have exploited the opportunity to gather information, but surviving sources provide no details.[85] He did know of their visit; he instructed the Central Secretariat to arrange their stay at Tianjie Monastery and provide each man with a bolt of cloth to make monk's robes.[86] Beyond gleaning intelligence from Japanese monks, Zhu Yuanzhang also used them as interpreters and cultural brokers. For instance in 1372, he ordered Chintei Kaiju to return to Japan as an interpreter for a Ming diplomatic mission.[87] Chintei Kaiju was likely sent in advance to ensure that the Ming team was

[82] For the role of Five Mountain Zen monks like Shun-oku Myōha (1311–88) in Ashikaga diplomatic initiatives, see Tanaka Takeo, *Zenkindai no kokusai kōryū*, pp. 4–7; Verschuer "Japan's Foreign Relations," pp. 421–22; Murai, *Ajia no naka*, pp. 294–311; Itō Kōji, "Gaikō to Zensō."

[83] *Honchō kōsōden*, chapter 36 (*Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho*, vol. 103, p. 503). Chintei Kaiju had been in China since 1350.

[84] Hanuki Masai, "NyūMinsō Chintei," p. 83.

[85] *MTZSL,* 90.3a, p. 1585. Cited in Kageki Motohiro, "Kōbuteiki Nicchū kankei kenkyū," p. 103, fn. 3.

[86] *MTZSL,* 90.3a, p. 1585; Wang, *Official Relations*, p. 14.

[87] Hanuki Masai, "NyūMinsō Chintei," pp. 82–84.

properly received, a prudent measure given how many Ming envoys had been either executed or detained in the recent past.[88]

Another source of information for Zhu Yuanzhang was his officials. Some had personal interactions with Japanese monks that predated the Ming dynasty's establishment.[89] We know, for instance, that Zhu Yuanzhang kept fully apprised of Song Lian's interactions, however distant or indirect, with Japanese monks. When the Chinese Buddhist monk Wuyi Keqin requested an inscription for a Japanese prelate, Song Lian initially demurred. Only after Song Lian received permission from Zhu Yuanzhang did he compose the inscription.[90] On another occasion, Song Lian declined a handsome commission to write an inscription for a Japanese literatus. Zhu Yuanzhang asked why. "For a senior minister of the lofty dynasty to accept the coin of a petty foreigner is not the way to venerate the dynastic polity." The response pleased the emperor.[91] These episodes conform to what we know about the Ming founder's close monitoring of his officials' dealings beyond the court.[92] Although his primary concern was potential conspiracy against the throne, Zhu Yuanzhang likely also picked his men's brains on other topics, including about what they knew about Japan. Ming envoys to Japan reported to Zhu Yuanzhang upon their return. Such men too provided firsthand observations on contemporary conditions to the throne.[93] Before looking at how he used this information, let us briefly review some key developments in Japan during the Ming founder's day.

Late Fourteenth-Century Japan

The Kamakura military government, which had spearheaded Japan's military defenses against the Mongols, fell in 1333. It was replaced by the Muromachi military government, headed by the Ashikaga family, and based in the capital at Kyoto. Both the Kamakura and Muromachi military governments exercised policing power on the Japanese imperial family's behalf. From the 1330s until 1390s, however, two branches of the imperial family contended for power and legitimacy.[94] The northern court in Kyoto was largely under the control of the Ashikaga family. The existence of at least two contending emperors, combined

[88] Enomoto, "NyūGen Nihonsō Chintei," pp. 92–93.
[89] Enomoto, "NyūGen Nihonsō Chintei," p. 83; Chen Gaohua, "Shisi shiji lai Zhongguo."
[90] Chen Xiaofa, *Mingdai ZhongRi*, p. 35.
[91] Shen Jia, *Ming ru yan xing lu xu bian*, *juan* 1 (*Siku quanshu* edition). Cited in Chen Xiaofa, *Mingdai ZhongRi*, p. 32.
[92] Wu Man, *Zhu Yuanzhang zhuan* (1949 ed.), pp. 222–31; Chen Wutong, *Hongwu*, pp. 564–67.
[93] Chen Xiaofa, *Mingdai ZhongRi*, pp. 52–63, 113–35. For Zekkai Chūshin's cultural exchanges with Ming monks, see Niu Jianqiang, "Ming Hongwuchu ZhongRi."
[94] Conlan, *State of War*; Sansom, *History of Japan*, *1334–1615*, pp. 59–115.

with frequent military conflict, meant considerable regional autonomy. It also meant that aspiring emperors and their backers needed to win the allegiance of warriors, aristocrats, and religious institutions.

During the tumultuous fourteenth century, issues of legitimacy often burned brightly.[95] To sway potential supporters, rival courts and their backers not only promised to protect economic interests, provide military assistance, and assure status. They also staked rival claims about legitimacy. One scholar argues that fundamental assumptions about the locus and creation of legitimacy arose. He observes, "in the turmoil of the fourteenth century, charismatic monks used ritual to determine the legitimacy of the state." He maintains that ritual "became the very essence of power as it alone created the seals of office and enthroned emperors."[96]

Thus when Zhu Yuanzhang began to establish ties with Japanese leaders, no unified government controlled the entire archipelago. Instead, the northern and southern courts, backed by a constellation of regional powers, jockeyed for power and legitimacy. Among the most powerful actors was the Muromachi military government, which staked broad claims and cultivated local allies in much of Japan. An important regional power directly relevant for discussion here was a loose confederation of military families based in Kyūshū. One member of the imperial family, Prince Kaneyoshi (1329–83), held a prominent place in Kyūshū politics. Kaneyoshi was the younger brother of the reigning emperor and a son of the previous Emperor Go-Daigo of the southern court. He had held the post of Commander of the Western Campaign (*Seizai shōgun*) since 1336. After twenty-five years of struggle, he had extended his writ throughout Kyūshū. From 1361 to 1371, Dazaifu (in today's Fukuoka) in Hakata was his headquarters.[97] Dazaifu had long been a window to the rest of East Asia.[98] Hakata Bay was where the Mongols' two abortive expeditions had disembarked, or attempted to do so. Dazaifu had also been the site of the Kamakura's regional military command established to coordinate the defense of Japan against the Mongols.[99]

By the mid-fourteenth century, lack of effective central political control contributed to the marked growth of private military entrepreneurship, which in coastal Kyūshū took the form of armed maritime trade that sometimes bled

[95] Hall, "Muromachi Bakufu," pp. 189–93. Amino Yoshihiko (*Chūsei no hinōgyōmin to tennō* among other works) famously argued that the fourteenth century witnessed a long-term diminution of the imperial throne's standing, which in turn undermined the social status of many of its dependent populations.

[96] Conlan, *Sovereign to Symbol*, p. 15.

[97] Prince Kaneyoshi had been appointed by the Southern Court to command the Headquarters for the Western Campaign (*Seizaifu*).

[98] Batten, *Gateway to Japan*.

[99] Murai, *Ajia no naka*, pp. 189–226.

into piracy.[100] Based on Tsushima, Iki, Matsuura, and the Gotō Islands west of Kyūshū, such groups were active throughout maritime East Asia. They raised greatest contemporary ire for their raids on the coasts of Koryŏ (even threatening to attack the capital of Kaegyŏng at one point) and China. In both places, they attacked coastal shipments of grain and inland granaries, seized slaves, and plundered whatever else they found.[101] Late fourteenth-century warfare in Kyūshū and elsewhere damaged domestic grain production, likely stimulating greater pressure to secure sufficient supplies through raids along the Korean and Chinese coasts.[102] Successful trade/piracy depended on timely, accurate information and a modicum of local support. During the 1350s and 1360s, regional polities along the southeastern coast of China headed by Fang Guozhen and Zhang Shicheng derived a portion of their revenue from maritime trade, which included cooperation with groups based in coastal Kyūshū.[103] Thus, for Zhu Yuanzhang, piracy was both an external security threat and a domestic control problem.[104] He was eager to secure assistance in resolving the piracy question, especially in dealing with bases located in Kyūshū that were far beyond his control. One historian suggests that for Zhu Yuanzhang, only someone capable of suppressing Japanese piracy was qualified to be King of Japan.[105]

To summarize, Zhu Yuanzhang's diplomatic initiatives with Japanese authorities were driven by both a general wish to secure recognition as a legitimate dynasty and a specific desire to win cooperation in resolving a pressing security issue.[106] He focused first on the region and the man that

[100] In the 1220s, groups based in Tsushima and Matsura raided the Koryŏ coast, in part out of resentment that annual trade missions had been abolished. A local Dazaifu official beheaded some of the raiders, but Japanese piracy continued. See Murai, "Wakō to "Nihon kokuō," pp. 7–8. Shapinsky (*Lords of the Sea*, pp. 69–104) explores the role of maritime magnates in the Inland Sea during the thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries.

[101] Seki Shūichi, "Chūka' no zaiken," pp. 81–88. Murai Shōsuke (*Bunretsu suru ōken*) characterizes these marauders, which included Korean members, as "marginal men," disaffected actors operating outside state control. For piratical attacks on the Chinese coast, see Meng, "'Wohuan' yu Mingqianqi ZhongRi."

[102] Murai, "Nanbokuchō no dōran," 85.

[103] Danjō Hiroshi, *Mindai kaikin*, pp. 53–67; Okuzaki Hiroshi, "Genmatsu sekihi"; "Hō Kokuchin no ran." Demobilized transport workers from the imperial grain delivery service likely expanded the ranks of piratical groups during the late Yuan period. See Danjō Hiroshi, *Mindai kaikin*, pp. 38–47; Chen Bo, "Haiyun chuanhu yu Yuanmo haikou."

[104] Murai, *Chūsei Nihon no uchi*, p. 154; "Wakō to 'Nihon kokuō'," pp. 7–8; *Bunretsu suru ōken*, pp. 181–82; Fujita Akiyoshi, "'Ransusan'."

[105] Murai, *Bunretsu suru ōken*, p. 182.

[106] Much Japanese language scholarship holds that the suppression of piracy was Zhu Yuanzhang's primary goal. Others maintain that diplomatic recognition was his priority. For review and interpretation that favors the latter position, see Nian Xu, "Minsho chōkō."

seemed most directly relevant to his objectives, Kyūshū and Prince Kaneyoshi.[107] Kyūshū was the region in Japan most directly and deeply influenced by the Mongols. Questions of political legitimacy and regional military alliances were also much on the minds of Prince Kaneyoshi and the Muromachi military government. Prince Kaneyoshi wanted to bolster legitimacy and to secure military support. Thus, he accepted investiture as King of Japan from Zhu Yuanzhang.[108] The Muromachi military government was acutely attuned to legitimacy challenges. During the 1330s, in the name of restoring the imperial family's proper place in the polity, Emperor Go-Daigo had mounted a highly disruptive intellectual and military challenge that hastened the Kamakura military government's fall.[109] Having gained power in a moment when the legitimacy of military governance was sharply questioned, Muromachi authorities strove to demonstrate their competence and justify their power. In his correspondence with the prince and later with the Muromachi military government, Zhu Yuanzhang frequently invoked the Chinggisids. He felt that reference to the Mongols made his points about political legitimacy and military might in ways that would strongly resonate with his audience.

Looking Beyond the Sino-Barbarian Divide

In communications with several rulers, Zhu Yuanzhang cast the Yuan dynasty as a foreign invader. In edicts issued to the kings of Champa and Java, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote of "aliens of the northern region" and "northern horsemen" that "seized and occupied."[110] In a 1369 edict to Tibetan authorities, Zhu Yuanzhang used a nearly identical phrase; "northern horsemen seized and occupied China for more than a century."[111] He drew on similar language with Japanese leaders, because he believed it addressed contemporary Japanese concerns.

[107] Murai, *Chūsei Nihon no uchi*, pp. 154–55; "Wakō to 'Nihon kokuō'," p. 14; *Bunretsu suru ōken*, pp. 182–85; "Nanbokuchō no dōran," pp. 85–86; Chang Tong'ik, *Mongoru teikokki*, pp. 53–76. Scholars debate which, if any, Japanese regional houses controlled pirate groups. For review, see Hashimoto Yū, "Wakōron no yukue," in *Kaiiki Ajiashi kenkyū nyūmon*, edited by Momoki Shirō, pp. 80–84.

[108] Debate surrounds whether Kaneyoshi accepted Ming investiture. For review, see Kuribayashi Norio, "Nihon kokuō Ryōkai," pp. 2–3. Kuribayashi ("Nihon kokuō Ryōkai," pp. 3–4, 11) suggests that Kaneyoshi accepted the title but had neither the intention nor ability to assist the Ming throne to eradicate piracy.

[109] Goble, *Kenmu*.

[110] *DMTZ*, 7.34b, vol. 2, p. 222; *MTZSL* 39.2b, p. 786; *DMTZ*, 7.35a, vol. 2, p. 222.

[111] *DMTZ*, 2.1b, vol. 1, p. 236; *MTZSL* 42.1a, p. 827.

In his first communication to the "King of Japan" early in 1369, Zhu Yuanzhang portrayed himself as the Mongols' vanquisher.[112] He related that he had cast off their polluting influences and avenged the humiliation suffered by the Song ruling house.

> Heaven above treasures life and abhors those who are not benevolent. In the past, in Our China, when the Zhao family's Song dynasty lost control, the northern barbarians entered (China) and occupied it. [They] spread northern horsemen customs that made the Central Lands reek of mutton. Chinese practices grew weak. For anyone with a heart, there was none not moved to fury. Since 1351, the Central Plains were in tumult. When you Japanese (Chin. *wo*; Jpn. *wa*) came to maraud in Shandong, it was nothing more than exploiting the decline of the northern horsemen Yuan. We are of a well-established Chinese family. Ashamed of the humiliation of prior rulers, [We] raised an army and ordered the troops to extirpate the northern horsemen foreigners. After two decades of constant effort, since last year, [We] exterminated the northern barbarians to become ruler of China.[113]

Having eliminated the foreign interlopers, Zhu Yuanzhang took the throne. Now he "specially notifies [the Japanese] of matters of the transmission of legitimate dynasties." He wished to make clear that he was not a warlord or regional leader. He instead was the proper ruler of a legitimate dynasty. In this letter, Zhu Yuanzhang leaves unclear whether he succeeded the Yuan or Song house in the transmission of legitimate dynasties. His claim about being from "a well-established family" is perhaps an effort to dispel concerns arising from Japanese aristocratic sensibilities about his humble origins and hardscrabble upbringing.

Casting off foreign invaders after a great struggle was a persistent theme in communications with Japanese authorities. In a 1370 edict to the "King of Japan," Zhu Yuanzhang again characterized the Yuan rulers as "northern horsemen barbarians from the northern steppe who had seized control of China."[114] One of Zhu Yuanzhang's envoys formulated the Ming emperor's qualification to rule in the following terms.[115] "The Emperor of the Great Ming, with godlike brilliance and awesome martiality, pressed the assembled caitiffs until they left his territory. He restored the former lands of the previous Song dynasty."[116] In this passage and elsewhere, reference to the Mongols is

[112] Drawing on a variety of Chinese and Japanese sources, Wang (*Official Relations*, pp. 10–33) discusses Zhu Yuanzhang's relations with Japanese leaders.

[113] *DMTZ*, 7.25b–26a, vol. 2, pp. 224–25; *MTZSL*, 39.3a, p. 785. For a nearly identical edict, see *DMTZ*, 7.33b–34a, vol. 2, pp. 220–21.

[114] *DMTZ*, 2.13b, vol. 1, p. 260; *MTZSL*, 50.7a, p. 987.

[115] The envoy was Wuyi Keqin.

[116] *Zenrinkoku hōki*, edited by Tanaka Takeo, pp. 98–103. Verschuer ("Japan's Foreign Relations," p. 439) offers a slightly different translation of this passage. She also provides a full and annotated translation of the letter. The remainder of the letter highlights matters of more obvious common interest, such as Buddhist rites for the wandering souls of those who died, presumably those who had died before Zhu Yuanzhang restored order and peace to the Central

offered as concrete evidence for Zhu Yuanzhang's outstanding qualities, such as surpassing intelligence and extraordinary martial prowess. In other words, the Ming court's envoy uses the Chinggisid narrative to show why an alliance with Zhu Yuanzhang should be attractive to Japanese authorities. Here was a man who had thrown off a powerful foreign power and restored native rule.

An alternate version of the envoy's letter includes the following line.

> In the past, the Mongols wrongfully invaded China, exterminated the Song and established themselves [as rulers]. Japan was enraged with the northern horsemen's debased behavior (literally the "actions of dogs and pigs") and thus considered them enemies. From that time, traces of disciples studying [Buddhist] teachings vanished from China.[117]

This version describes the Mongols' actions as the behavior of animals. It also explicitly states that Japan looked upon the Mongols as enemies for their destruction of the Song ruling house and their wrongful occupation of China. The envoy depicts the Mongols as the common enemy of Japan and China. Zhu Yuanzhang's triumph over the Mongols thus constitutes a shared victory over the barbarian.[118]

In a 1380 communication to the "King of Japan," Zhu Yuanzhang makes the case even more strongly. He opens with the lines: "In the past, Song lost control and Central Lands suffered harm. The Jin and Yuan entered and ruled for more than two hundred years. They changed customs and altered practices. China reeked of the stench of mutton. All men of principle were moved to fury."[119] Responding to the righteous fury of men of principle, Zhu Yuanzhang took up the monumental task of cleansing China of foreign pollution. As was the aim in some versions of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative, the deeper the damage inflicted by the Mongols, the more epic was Zhu Yuanzhang's success in expelling them.

Zhu Yuanzhang tailored his story to Japanese audiences' sensibilities. For them, it was obvious that Buddhist and Shinto deities had played an essential role in defeating the Mongol incursions. At the same time, a sense of crisis and uncertainty heightened people's support for local tutelary deities. People

Plains. The letter also refers to Zhu Yuanzhang's hope that the Japanese court will suppress piracy, permit trade, and establish cordial diplomatic relations.

117 *Rinkō shōsho*, p. 225.

118 Later in the same missive, Wuyi Keqin explains that Zhu Yuanzhang sent him as envoy because of Japan's righteous behavior, its former admiration of the Song and hostility to the "northern horsemen," and finally its veneration of Buddhism and respect for the clergy. See Itō Matsu, *Rinkō shōsho*, p. 227.

119 *DMTZ*, 2.16a, vol. 1, p. 265; (*Ming Taizu*) *Yu zhi wen ji*, 2.14a–b, pp. 85–86 (quotation appears on p. 85); *Ci zhu fan zhao chi* (*Mingchao kaiguo wenxian*, vol. 3, pp. 1815–16); *MTZSL*, 134.8a–b, pp. 2135–36. The edict also appears in *HMZZ*, 1.84a (*XXSK, shi*, vol. 457, p. 576).

expressed their faith and gratitude through, for instance, contributions of cash to cover the costs of celebratory festivals and theatrical performances held in honor of meritorious deities.[120] Textual and pictorial narratives vividly depicted the battlefield contributions of deities of individual monasteries and shrines.[121] The production of such tales helped consolidate transitory perceptions and emotions into a more lasting legacy. In the process, Mongols too were incorporated into historical memory.[122]

One text important in the transformation of the Mongol invasion into living and lasting historical memory is *Lessons for a Simple Boy of Hachiman* (*Hachiman gudōkin*). *Lessons* was likely produced by someone associated with the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine (located in today's Kyoto Prefecture) sometime in the late thirteenth century. In other words, it took form soon after the abortive Mongol invasions and amidst acute fear of yet another attack.[123] This text establishes a direct link between the Mongols and much earlier foreign enemies, the Koguryŏ, Silla, and Paekche kings, which legendary Empress Jingū defeated in the third century. Empress Jingū's triumphs over the kings of Korea appear in one of Japan's earliest written histories, *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki* or *Nihongi*), which was completed in 720.[124] In the late classical and medieval periods, Empress Jingū's son, Emperor Ōjin, came to be understood as Hachiman, a local god who grew into a deity known throughout Japan.[125]

Stories of Empress Jingū feature a dramatic moment when the Koguryŏ king knelt in submission and took a binding oath that he and his progeny would serve as dogs to protect the empress and Japan.[126] One passage in *Lessons for a Simple Boy* explicitly states that the Mongols were descendants of the Koguryŏ king. The text continues that the Mongols were immeasurably

[120] Kaizu Ichirō, "'Genkō'," pp. 14–15; *Kamikaze to akutō*, pp. 38–44.

[121] For an excellent point of departure, see the Hachiman Digital Handscroll project at Heidelberg University. http://kjc-sv013.kjc.uni-heidelberg.de/hachiman/#O44115. My thanks to my colleague Haruko Wakabayashi for bringing this site to my attention.

[122] Ōta ("Hachiman daibosatsu shinkō to 'bahansen'," pp. 462–64, 492–93) describes *Lessons for a Simple Boy of Hachiman* (*Hachiman gudōkin*) as an "ember" of the memory of Hachiman's heroics against the Mongols that, even centuries later, might grow into a burning flame given the right circumstances.

[123] For production and transmission of *Illustrated Tales of Hachiman*, with particular attention to its textual sources, see Tsutsui Daisuke, "Hachiman engi emaki.

[124] For the *Nihongi* account of the kings' oaths of allegiance, see Aston, pp. 231–32.

[125] Ōta ("Hachiman daibosatsu shinkō to 'bahansen'," p. 479) notes without corroborating evidence that with the establishment of military governments, that is, in the late twelfth century when the Kamakura military government was founded, Hachiman emerged as the most important war deity in Japan.

[126] This tableau also appears in *Shikaumi jinjia enga*. See Wakabayashi, "The Mongol Invasions," pp. 112–13.

inferior to the Japan imperial ruling house.[127] The story thus offers a reassuring message. The subjugation and humiliation of the most dangerous foreign enemy in living memory, that is, the Mongols, is foreordained through analogy to Empress Jingū's taming of the Korean kings. Scholars frequently note that Japanese condescension, even hostility, for Koreans intensified in the wake of the Mongol invasions.[128] Less well understood is Japanese perception of the Mongols in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.[129]

Illustrated Tales of the Mongol Invasion scrolls (*Mōko shūrai ekotoba*) depict both the Mongol invaders and Japan's valiant defenders in colorful detail.[130] The scrolls circulated widely in several versions, which varied by time and place of production.[131] In addition, more than a dozen scrolls dedicated to Hachiman's exploits dating from the post-Mongol invasion period have been discovered.[132] Shikauma Shrine, located in Hakata Bay, too produced an illustrated scroll depicting Empress Jingū's clash with the Koreans that was informed by the *Mongol Invasion* scroll tradition.[133] Thus, visual images of the Mongol invaders circulated broadly in the decades and centuries following Qubilai's attack. Most depict the Mongols as fierce but thoroughly human warriors. Others portray them as subhuman or demonic figures.[134]

[127] *Hachiman gudōkin* rpt. in *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 20, p. 191. Cited in Wakabayashi, "Mongol Invasions," pp. 123–24. Murai (*Nihon chūsei no ibunka sesshoku*, pp. 397–98) also draws attention to this passage.

[128] As illustrative examples, see Kuroda, "Land of Kami," p. 380; Murai, "Mōko shūrai to ibunka sesshoku," pp. 77–79); Wakabayashi, "The Mongol Invasions," p. 116). Scholars speculate that the Japanese linked the Mongols and Koreans, because invading fleets had arrived from Korea and Korean sailors served on the ships. This perception explains in part why in 1275, the Kamakura military government formulated plans to attack Koryŏ. Murai ("Ōto Ōmin shisō to kyūseiki no tankan") traces the origins of Japanese elite suspicion and hostility to Silla (and Korea more generally) to the tumultuous domestic conditions of the ninth century, which heightened Japan's ruling class' sense of insecurity.

[129] Kaizu Ichirō, "'Genkō'; Wakō, Nihon kokuō," pp. 3, 5.

[130] For reproduction of the *Mongol Invasion* scroll with full and annotated translation of the text, see Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*.

[131] Study of the scrolls, including attribution, circulation, performance, and scene-by-scene analysis of clothing and weapons, has busied scholars for decades. See Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention* for synthesis. Satō Tetsutarō (*Mōko shūrai ekotoba*, pp. 21–34) notes eleven differences between the depiction of three Mongol warriors in section 7 of the Mongol invasion scroll. He argues that the warriors were the work of the painter Fukuda Taika (1795–1854). Wakabayashi ("Mongol Invasions") identifies fourteenth-century representations of the Mongol invasions as an important moment in the development of an icon of deracinated alien enemies.

[132] Wakabayashi, "Mongol Invasions," pp. 107–8.

[133] Wakabayashi, "Mongol Invasions."

[134] *Tale of Great Minister Yuriwaka* (*Yuriwaka daijin*) revolves around the adventures of the warrior Yuriwaka who pursues the defeated and retreating Mongols. A wood block version preserved at Tokyo University General Library depicts the Mongols as horned demons with shaggy manes. Reproduced in Murai, *Ajia no naka*, p. 55, figure 4. *Kōrasha engi* is thought to be a late-Muromachi (that is, sixteenth century) work. See *Saji sankei mandara*, p. 212. I thank Haruko Wakabayashi for not only bringing this image to my attention but also sharing a scanned copy with me. Kōrasha Shrine is located in Kurume, Fukuoka.

Historical memory of the Mongol invasions continued to shape perceptions into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1314, word spread that the deities of northern Kyūshū had foiled a Mongolian invasion attempt. In 1362 and 1368, again rumors swirled of further Mongol attacks.[135] One specialist of this period observes, "Throughout the fourteenth century, fear of Mongol attack tightly gripped the Japanese people."[136] In 1419, the Chosŏn throne organized a large-scale military strike against a pirate base on Tsushima. Two contemporary diarists, living far away in Kyoto, filtered the event through the lens of the thirteenth century Mongol invasions. The chief monk of Daigoji Monastery in Kyoto, Mansai (1378–1435) was a key advisor to the Muromachi military government. In an otherwise reliable and accurate diary, the abbot describes the Korean raid as a Mongol invasion consisting of 500 ships from Koryŏ and more than 20,000 boats from China. He continues that half of the Korean troops were killed in combat, while the Chinese boats were destroyed by a typhoon.[137] In his diary, *Kanmon ikki*, Prince Fushimi no miya Sadafusa (1372–1456) offers a similar description. He notes that a joint force of Mongols and Koreans in 500 ships struck Tsushima. Defenders killed more than 3,700 people.[138] These two diaries and at least one other account draw attention to the role of Hachiman and Empress Jingū in defending Japan against this most recent foreign attack.[139]

These accounts, which draw from contemporary rumor rather than personal experience, suggest something of historical memory of the abortive Mongol invasions. They suggest both fear of foreign attack and confidence in protective deities to foil such assaults. In addition, some visual depictions of the invasions render the Mongols as subhuman or demonic figures. The strongly negative charge of the Mongols as invaders coexisted with the largely positive associations of Yuan period Chinese culture.

Keeping in mind Japanese historical memory of the Qubilai's abortive invasions, let us return to the way Zhu Yuanzhang invoked the Mongols in his communications to Japanese authorities. The Ming founder highlighted the contrast between the barbarian Mongol ruler who had corrupted China society and his own heroic restoration of Song territory and Chinese culture. We might read such language as yet another instance of a standard Sino-Barbarian

[135] Kaizu Ichirō, *Kamikaze to akutō*, p. 26. [136] Kaizu Ichirō, *Kamikaze to akutō*, p. 27.

[137] Ōta Kōki (*Wakō–shōgyō gunjishiteki kenkyū*, pp. 520–25) examines the description in *Mansai jūgō nikki*.

[138] Ōta Kōki (*Wakō–shōgyō gunjishiteki kenkyū*, pp. 507–10) discusses the description in *Kanmon nikki*.

[139] Ōta Kōki, *Wakō–shōgyō gunjishiteki kenkyū*, pp. 504–37. The first formal report to Ashikaga authorities in Kyoto from an official in Hakata similarly insisted that 500 Mongol ships had attacked Tsushima but had been driven off by 700 Japanese cavalry soldiers. See Saeki Kōji, "Ōei no gaikō," p. 22. Ashikaga authorities initiated prayers at shrines to repel the foreign invaders.

discourse. As noted, Zhu Yuanzhang used similar phrases in proclamations to leaders in the Tibetan borderlands, Koryŏ, Champa, Java, and elsewhere. In other words, one might conclude that the early Ming court produced standardized diplomatic language, including an emphasis on China's uniquely central role in the world, which it used uniformly in its foreign relations.

In contrast, the argument here is that Zhu Yuanzhang understood the political and military conditions of Japan in general and Kyūshū in particular. Thus, he initially sought out Prince Kaneyoshi as an ally. Through his interactions with Japanese and Chinese monks, he grasped something of contemporary Japanese perceptions of the Mongols, the Yuan dynasty, and Yuan-period China. He depicted the Mongols as foreign invaders who despoiled Chinese culture. He described himself as a man of good family who restored Chinese political control and moral traditions. This was a deliberate strategy based on the early Ming court's understanding of contemporary Japanese perceptions rather than standard boilerplate distributed to all neighboring rulers.

Let us turn to another example of Zhu Yuanzhang's attempts to turn the story of the Mongols to his advantage. As was true in communications with the Koryŏ court and supporters of the Great Yuan, Zhu Yuanzhang stressed the Ming dynasty's irresistible military power in relations with Japanese authorities. He drove his point home through repeated reference to the Mongols. The same overwhelming force that defeated the Yuan dynasty, he threatens again and again, will be unleashed against Japanese authorities unless they properly acknowledge the Ming dynasty's rise and cease coastal raiding. The following passage from a 1376 edict refers directly to the Mongols' abortive invasions of Japan. Zhu Yuanzhang uses the episodes to question Japan's puissance.

In the past, the northern horsemen Yuan signally violated Lord Heaven's[140] command and destroyed dynasties that were without transgression. It brought disaster to officials and subjects. It ran roughshod through the Northwest and reached the Central Lands. No one dared confront them. It was said they were unmatched under Heaven. Spreading their sails, they headed to Japan. Before the troops landed, before the bells and drums sounded, before the ranks were formed, a Heavenly Wind created savage waves. Masts and oars were destroyed. It resulted in Regional Commander Ataghai, Fan Wenhu, and others, some 100,000 men, drowning in the southeast waters.[141] Was this in fact because Japan's armies were excellent or because of Heaven's Way's diminution of the full?[142]

[140] Earlier in the document, Zhu Yuanzhang refers to Heaven-on-High 上帝. Thus *di* 帝 here means Heaven-on-High rather than "emperor."

[141] In fact, both Ataghai (1234–89) and Fan (d. 1302) survived the 1281 debacle. Ataghai follows Christopher Atwood's suggested transcription.

[142] *DMTZ*, 2.15b, vol. 1, p. 264; *MTZSL*, 105.4a–b, pp. 1755–56.

Earlier in the same edict, Zhu Yuanzhang had invoked the authority of the *Classic of Changes*. He cited the passage "Heaven's Way is to diminish the full and augment the empty."[143]

For the Ming founder, the answer was clear. Mongol defeat resulted not from Japanese soldiers' excellence but from Heaven's Way.[144] Zhu Yuanzhang explained that Yuan armies may have failed to conquer Japan, but "all countries under Heaven dared not raise their eyes [to confront] them." In the end, it was Zhu Yuanzhang who, with a small army and in less than five years, vanquished the mighty Yuan military. Zhu likewise attributes his unlikely success to Heaven's support rather than human effort. The conclusion to be drawn from such events, Zhu Yuanzhang implies, is that the Ming dynasty now enjoys Heaven's support. Besides, he adds, "with favorable winds and furled sails," his ships can reach Japan in just five days and nights.[145]

In a 1370 edict, Zhu Yuanzhang refers to his military successes over the Mongols. His aim is to pressure Japanese authorities into recognizing his dynasty. Not only had he defeated the Yuan dynasty, here referred to as "northern barbarians," he had also driven them deep into the steppe.

> The northern barbarians have fled far into the steppe. It is almost 10,000 *li*. [We] have specially dispatched the Caitiff-Quelling Grand Commander to lead 800,000 men and mounts to go beyond the border passes and chase [them] down. [My forces] have exterminated the leaders. The great unification [of the realm] has been completed.[146]

It is unclear how much Japanese leaders knew of Zhu Yuanzhang's military campaigns against the Great Yuan in the years immediately following Daidu's fall. Here the Ming founder puts a positive spin on things, presenting his rivalry with the Great Yuan as finished business. Indeed at the time, April 1370, he had every reason to be optimistic. However, his assertion that his armies and military strategists were all idle, immediately available for a strike against Japan unless piracy ceased, was disingenuous. The military and political threat posed by the Yuan court and its affiliates would preoccupy the Ming court for decades. The Ming founder ended this 1370 edict with one final reference to the Mongols. "If We were like previous rulers, relying on a great host of soldiers and numerous strategists to cross distantly the seas to bring catastrophe to the peaceful people of the outer barbarians," Heaven would be displeased.

According to the *Ming Veritable Records*, the Ming envoy responsible for delivering the edict just cited, Zhao Zhi 趙秩, encountered a deeply skeptical

[143] "Qian," *Yijing Classic of Changes*, translation by Legge.
[144] Scholars continue to debate the efficacy of Japanese military defenses. For review of the question and revisionist interpretation, see Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, pp. 254–75.
[145] *DMTZ*, 2.15b–16a, vol. 1, pp. 264–65; *MTZSL*, 105.4b, pp. 1756.
[146] *DMTZ*, 2.14a, vol. 1, p. 261; *MTZSL*, 50.7a–b, pp. 987–88.

audience in Japan. Prince Kaneyoshi detained him in Dazaifu. Although isolated far to the east, Japan had always admired Chinese civilization and had regularly offered tribute, the prince noted. However, the Mongols changed everything. The prince explained:

> Their envoy was surnamed Zhao (that is, Zhao Liangbi 趙良弼), who beguiled us with good words. We initially did not understand that he was spying on our kingdom. Shortly later dozens of stout ships brought by the envoy were arrayed along the coast. Aided by the spirits of Heaven and Earth, in an instant, angry winds and waves capsized them nearly without exception. From then, we had no relations for decades. Now a new Son of Heaven rules China. The court's envoy was also surnamed Zhao. Could he not be a descendant of the Mongol envoy who will beguile with good words in order to attack us?'

At this point, according to Zhao Zhi, Kaneyoshi ordered his warriors to cut him down. Unfazed, the Ming envoy responded:

> The present Sage Son-of-Heaven possesses daemonic sagacity in civil and military matters; his brilliance illuminates the eight far-flung regions of desolation. He was born in China and rules China. It is not to be compared to the Mongols. I as envoy am not the descendant of the Mongol envoy. If you rebel, disbelieving me, and murder me, then your disaster too will soon arrive. Our dynasty's troops are Heaven's troops. There is not one that cannot face one hundred. Our dynasty's warships can each face one hundred of even the Mongol ships. Further, all know that the locus of Heaven's Mandate cannot be wrong. How is Our dynasty's decorous embrace of you to be compared to the Mongols' attack of you?[147]

Convinced, the prince then extended Zhao Zhi the extraordinary treatment he deserved.[148] Kaneyoshi dispatched his own envoy bearing a petition declaring his subordination as minister to the Ming throne. He and Zhao Zhi traveled together on the return trip to Nanjing.[149]

In this account, the prince understands the new Ming dynasty through the prism of past experiences with the Mongols.[150] The Mongol fleet's attack augurs a similar Ming assault. Mongol diplomatic overtures prefigure Ming efforts to beguile. Even the Mongol envoy's surname has a perfect analogue in Zhao Zhi. In response, Zhao Zhi takes pains to illustrate the differences the Mongols (a term used throughout this episode rather than "Yuan") and the Ming dynasty. The sage and talented Zhu Yuanzhang is a Chinese ruler for

[147] *MTZSL*, 68.5b–6b, pp. 1280–82.
[148] Some scholars dismiss out of hand the idea that Prince Kaneyoshi would accept Ming investiture. They argue that Zhao fabricated his report to the Ming throne. Others suggest that Zhao likely exaggerated his bravery and eloquence but believe Kaneyoshi was open to the idea of Ming investiture. See Kuribayashi Norio, "Nihon kokuō Ryōkai," pp. 2–4.
[149] *MTZSL*, 68.5b–6b, pp. 1280–82.
[150] Murai ("Mōko shūrai to ibunka sesshoku," [2010] p. 57) notes the power of memories of the Mongols.

China, unlike the Mongols who were foreign invaders. As noted, the early Ming court draws on the rhetoric of clear Sino-barbarian contrasts in ways that speak specifically to contemporary Japanese audiences. Zhao Zhi insists that the Ming military far surpasses the Mongol forces of the thirteenth century. That the Ming dynasty possesses Heaven's Mandate is clear to all. Whether Zhao means that the Mongols held the mandate is left ambiguous. Finally, the new Ming dynasty's commitment to ritually correct relations with neighbors stands in clear contrast to the Mongols' unprincipled attacks.

Again in 1381, Zhu Yuanzhang returns to the topic of Qubilai's abortive campaigns against Japan and their contemporary significance. He offers an extended analysis of why Japan had escaped Mongol rule. As the following passage makes clear, Zhu Yuanzhang believed that Ashikaga authorities had drawn the wrong lessons from Qubilai's defeat. He tries to disabuse them of what he considered ill-founded confidence based on past Japanese victories over Yuan armies.

You say that the Yuan ships were buffeted by the serpentine seas and that your generals are without rivals in the world. I do not know whether your country takes this as brought about by Heaven or whether it was brought about by human affairs. If we compare things in terms of human affairs, the Yuan were born among the violet passes. They did not rely on ships but traveled great distances by hoof and cart. For years, they were unstoppable and gathered territory. In a word, it was only because they excelled in riding and archery and fell short in ships and oars [that they failed against Japan].

Further, at the time, Japan was not the Yuan's enemy; it was not a neighboring country that threatened harm. The Yuan violated Heaven-on-High's mandate; it was given to violence and esteemed arms. Heaven abhorred its military campaigns. The winds and waves raged; great ships sank by the thousands; excellent troops dropped to the sea bottom. The general attributes this to the abilities of your kingdom's people, but could you have ever seen the Yuan's strength on land and carved battle pennants? Excellent troops and noble steeds gather as numerous as the clouds. The carved battle pennants stretch out into formations like a forbidding mountain raising dust that reaches to Heaven. The horses' hooves sound like thunder. Their weapons[151] flash like lightning. The northern horsemen inspire awe. The bare blades and mighty roars send demons and ghouls into flight.[152] Thus, the eight *man* (of the south) and the nine *yi* (of the east) all came under their rule.

Whereas you Japan were located faraway across the sea. If [the Yuan] acquired the land, it would have been insufficient to broaden their territory. If it acquired the people, they would not have been what the Yuan employed. Thus, [the Yuan] considered the losses as minor and did not contend for your miniscule territory.

In addition, it understood Heaven's Mandate [which dictated that] the disasters of war were not be visited upon Japan's good people. For your territory, I will use sailors

[151] Literally "halberds and spears."

[152] The Chinese here leaves open the possibility to interpret the text in the past or present tense. Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang could be simultaneously talking about the Mongols of the thirteenth century and the Great Yuan of his own day.

who I will instruct. I will command painters to depict them (that is, make maps of Japanese territory). [Even] using excesses to make up for shortcomings, [your island] measures in circumference no more than 10,000 *li*. In comparison to the long campaigns of the Yuan's hooves and carts that lasted for years on end when they were unstoppable, do I not know which is great and which is insignificant? Now in recent years, your country lauds itself as powerful; it allows the people to become raiders; it plunders with abandon neighboring countries. Do you insist on a contest of arms to see right and wrong, to make clear strong and weak? The day my message arrives, general, consider this![153]

Zhu Yuanzhang attempts to subvert what he takes to be the Ashikaga's Chinggisid narrative.[154] He believes that the Ashikaga authorities told a tale of the Mongols that showcases Japanese military prowess and justifies resistance to the Ming court's demands. Zhu Yuanzhang retells the story to highlight the Great Yuan's military strength and Japan's strategic insignificance. Japan was never important enough, either as prize or foe, to merit the Mongols' full attention. Japanese generals never faced the Yuan armies' true power. Zhu Yuanzhang asserts that Yuan defeat owed more to Heaven's displeasure with Qubilai's gratuitous military adventures than to Japanese defenses.

Zhu Yuanzhang failed to intimidate Japanese authorities. A letter often attributed to Prince Kaneyoshi refutes the Ming emperor's claim as a universal sovereign.[155] The prince argues that the emergence of a ruler in China does not mean that there are no other rulers in the world. The letter omits mention of the Mongols. It does, however, read like a response to Zhu Yuanzhang's threatening invocation of Qubilai's abortive campaigns. The text explains that Japan's small size and few dozen cities suffice for him. In contrast, he points out, Zhu Yuanzhang has plans for expansion far beyond his borders. The Ming founder is not content to be "ruler of China and sovereign of ten thousands

[153] *DMTZ*, 16.17b–18b, vol. 3, pp. 194–96. A slightly different version appears in *MTZSL*, 138.3b–4a, pp. 2176–77.

[154] When in 1470, Zuikei Shūhō completed his compilation of Japanese authorities' diplomatic correspondence with the Ming, Koryŏ, and Chosŏn courts, he annotated the texts related to the Mongol invasions with repeated references to the information from *The Official History of the Yuan Dynasty*. He did not draw attention to *The Official History of the Yuan Dynasty* as an unusual source. Presumably his audience was familiar with the work. This is another example of how the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative shaped neighbors' perceptions.

[155] The editors of *The Official History of the Ming Dynasty* write that Prince Kaneyoshi composed the document in 1381 in response to one of Zhu Yuanzhang's censorious epistles. See *MS*, 322.27.8343–44. The two Ming period collections that include the letter mention neither a specific author nor date. It is identified as a letter of petition (*biao*) from Japan to open relations with the Ming dynasty. As shown shortly, an entry from the *Ming Veritable Records* dated to the twelfth lunar month of the thirteenth year of the Hongwu reign (December 27, 1380 to January 25, 1381) refers to a passage from the letter. This suggests that the letter had been sent enough in the past to allow its delivery from somewhere in Japan. Murai (*Bunretsu suru ōken*, p. 194) proposes that the prince had sent the text in 1376. Others such as Kuribayashi ("Nihon kokuō Ryōkai," p. 10) suggest that it was written shortly after Zhu Yuanzhang's 1381 missive.

chariots, venerable above all others." Although "his cities number in excess of several thousands, and his territory is more than several tens of thousands of *li*," Zhu Yuanzhang wants more. The prince then contrasts Zhu Yuanzhang's grasping behavior with ancient sage kings who won the foreign leaders' recognition and veneration through superior virtue.[156] In his communications to Japanese authorities, Zhu Yuanzhang had criticized the Mongols' insatiable desire for new territories. Now, the prince levels those same charges against the Ming emperor. Where Zhu Yuanzhang asserts his commitment to restoration of Chinese tradition, the prince insists that the new emperor violates standards of rulership established by Chinese sage-kings of antiquity.

The prince directly addresses the war's likely consequences, again refuting Zhu Yuanzhang claims.

> Now I learn that your mighty dynasty has plans to wage war. This small country has ways to repel armies. How would I be willing to take to the road to offer respect to the imperial visage? If we were to yield to him, we may not necessarily live. If we were to resist him, we may not die. Now we learn that Your Majesty has selected trusted generals and raised an army of troops from throughout the dynasty to attack your servitor's borders.

The prince subverts Zhu Yuanzhang's dire predictions of certain destruction for Japan with a lighthearted, almost absurd, countersuggestion.[157] Rather than determining things through war, "Let us play a game of *boxi* before Mt. Helan," he offers. Mt. Helan was a world away from the prince.[158] It is a 110-mile (180 km) long mountain range located where today's Inner Mongolia and the Ningxi Hui Autonomous Region meet. As the crow flies, it is some 1,800 miles (3,000 km) from Hakata Bay. "From antiquity to the present, negotiating peace has been best; ending war has been strength." Not only would needless suffering be averted. The Ming court could achieve its ends. "We will submit tribute to China each and every year." The prince cannot

[156] Following his observation that Zhu Yuanzhang plans to expand abroad, the prince quotes with slight modification a passage from the *Yellow Emperor's Scripture of the Hidden Talisman* (*Huangdi yin fu jing* 黃帝陰符經).

[157] The letter is commonly read as a proud even arrogant statement reflecting the prince's great confidence in his abilities. However, most evidence suggests that by the late 1370s and certainly by 1381, Kaneyoshi was in dire straits. See Kuribayashi Norio, "Nihon kokuō Ryōkai," pp. 6–8; Kageki Motohiro, "Minshi Chūyū Sosen," pp. 45–46. If the prince did write the letter, we should be open to the possibility that his grand posturing was a product of desperation rather than overweening pride.

[158] Murai (*Bunretsu suru ōken*, pp. 192–98; *Kokkyō*, pp. 105–14) offers an ingenious if ultimately unpersuasive explanation of the prince's letter and the reference to Mt. Helan. Nonetheless, his insight about the importance of envoys, the flow of important political information, and broad, interregional perspectives at the time remains useful.

resist a final, parting slight. "Forever will we declare ourselves ministers," he concludes "to a weak dynasty."[159]

This section has argued that Zhu Yuanzhang was convinced that the Mongol legacy mattered deeply not only to Japanese memory of the past but also behavior in the present. To capitalize on Japanese perceptions, Zhu Yuanzhang highlighted two points in his communications with Japanese authorities. First, the Mongols were foreign interlopers whose rule corrupted Chinese society and culture. By vanquishing the Mongols, erasing their deleterious influence, and reviving Chinese tradition, Zhu Yuanzhang demonstrated his credentials as ruler of a legitimate dynasty. This fits comfortably within Sino-Barbarian rhetoric that both preceded and succeeded the Ming dynasty's founding. This section suggests, however, that rather than speaking in general terms, Zhu Yuanzhang was addressing contemporary Japanese perceptions of the Mongols as rapacious invaders that were viewed with a mix of dread, condescension, and loathing. The Ming founder stressed his identity as defender of Chinese civilization against barbarian invaders because such a contrast resonated with Japanese historical memory.

Second, Zhu Yuanzhang foregrounded Qubilai's armadas to highlight Ming military might. He argued that Japan evaded Mongol control only because its relative insignificance never merited full employment of Qubilai's military resources. In contrast, Zhu Yuanzhang had faced and defeated the Mongols' awe-inspiring armies. Further, his commanders and strategists were now available for a campaign if Japanese authorities continued their errant behavior. Zhu Yuanzhang wanted his Japanese audiences to keep the Mongols' expeditions in mind. In the 1381 edict just cited, he counseled the Ashikaga authorities. "The Founding Emperor of the Yuan dispatched soldiers to campaign [against you]. They returned with thousands of male and female captives. Past events of the centuries should serve as a mirror."[160] The Mongols had shown that a military strike was possible. Heaven, not Japanese defenses, had foiled the Mongols. The Ming dynasty now held Heaven's support and commanded massive, experienced armies. It had already defeated its main rival – at least in Zhu Yuanzhang's telling of the tale. The sword of Damocles remained suspended above Japanese authorities' heads. Only their

[159] Xu Zhenqing, *Jian sheng ye wen*, *GCDG*, 3.1.64. The text appears in slightly modified form in *YSTBJ*, 85.4.1630–31. At one point, Zhu Yuanzhang refers explicitly to the prince's offer. He asks a visiting Japanese envoy, "why it was that [the prince] would in fact wish to determine victory or defeat through a game? Zhu Yuanzhang insisted that if the prince persisted in his arrogance and failed to rein in his people's predations, it would result in his certain destruction. The entry is dated to the twelfth lunar month of Hongwu 13, that is, December 27, 1380 to January 25, 1381. See *HMZZ*, 1.84a–b, pp. (*XXSK*, *shi* 457, p. 576); *MTZSL*, 134.8a–b, pp. 2135–36. Wang (*Official Relations*, pp. 18–19) translates a portion of Prince Kaneyoshi's letter based on a variant text.

[160] *DMTZ*, 16.16a, vol. 3, p. 192; *MTZSL*, 138.2b, p. 2174.

good behavior and Zhu Yuanzhang's respect for Heaven prevented its fatal downward swing. Here as elsewhere, the Ming founder reinterpreted the story of the Mongol empire to pursue his own objectives.

The Great Việt (Đại Việt)

During the second half of the thirteenth century (1257–58, 1284–85, and 1287), the Mongols had abortively invaded what is today northern Vietnam in a series of destructive campaigns.[161] Eventually, the Mongols, whose armies suffered unsustainable losses, reached a rapprochement, which included the temporary installation of a Mongolian governor, with the ruling house, the Trần dynasty (1225–1400). Despite this accommodation, Vietnamese defenses prevented the sort of full-scale conquests that had befallen northern neighbors such as the Song and Koryŏ dynasties. Memory of the war against the Mongols generated political and cultural capital at the time and in later generations.[162]

Despite the impact of Mongol power on Vietnam, in his 1368, 1369, and 1370 edicts to "Annam" (what the Great Ming called the Great Việt), Zhu Yuanzhang merely mentioned the seventeen years of warfare following the collapse of Yuan governance; otherwise the Chinggisids did not figure in his description of his rise or prospects. He refers twice to succeeding to "the orthodox transmission of legitimate dynasties."[163] Similarly, in an edict to the Great Việt, Japan, Java, and Champa, Zhu Yuanzhang passes over the Chinggisids in nearly complete silence. "The Yuan capital was taken; the territories are unified; and [Zhu Yuanzhang] has already succeeded to the orthodox transmission of legitimate dynasties."[164] In fact, none of the fourteen edicts, instructions, and memorandum related to the Trần dynasty included in the *Collected Writings of the Grand Progenitor of the Great Ming* mentions the Mongols.

On the other hand, Zhu Yuanzhang did think observers in the Trần dynasty were interested in contemporary Chinggisid affairs, or least in the Ming emperor's triumphs over his steppe rivals. He included the Trần dynasty among the kingdoms to which he sent envoys announcing his 1370 victory

[161] Yamamoto Tatsurō, *Annanshi kenkyū*, pp. 147–268. Taylor (*A History of the Vietnamese People*, pp. 123–39) shows how military crisis influenced domestic political and cultural developments.

[162] Wolters, "Phạn Sū Mạnh's Poems," pp. 107–8; "Assertions of Cultural Well-Being (Part I)," pp. 436–37.

[163] *DMTZ*, 2.1a, vol. 1, pp. 255–57. The reference to succeeding to the orthodox transmission of legitimate dynasties also appears in the 1368 edict to Annan announcing the dynasty's founding. See *MTZSL*, 37.23a, p. 751; 47.3b, p. 934.

[164] *DMTZ*, 2.1a, vol. 1, p. 235.

over the Great Yuan court and his capture of the Great Khan's grandson, Maidaribala.[165]

Only in 1397 did Zhu Yuanzhang refer to the Trần dynasty's relations with the Great Yuan at any length. The context was conflict over the border between the Ming and Trần dynasties, specifically Siming Prefecture.[166] After reviewing Han, Tang, and Song period developments, Zhu Yuanzhang turned to Qubilai's measures.

> During the time of Yuan Shizu (Qubilai), your forefather [Trần] Quang Bính came to court in submission and declared himself minister [to Qubilai]. When [Trần] Nhật Huyễn succeeded to the throne, he failed to observe the fidelity of a minister, whereupon Shizu raised an army to chastise his transgression. [Trần] Nhật Huyễn covered himself with brambles and hid in the grass. The common people were nearly eradicated; the city walls were almost reduced to ruins. When [Trần] Nhật Tuấn succeeded to the throne, he begged for forgiveness.[167] Shizu dispatched an envoy to accept [Trần's] submission. He instructed [the king] to present himself at court. At that time, the edict included reference to the return of territory, but [Trần] Nhật Tuấn said, "In the past, the Heavenly envoy debased himself to visit this insignificant kingdom. [We] received and escorted him back at Luzhou/Lộc Châu. This was nothing more than this insignificant kingdom, in fear of the transgression of violating [the border], always parted with him at Khâu Ôn (today's Pr. Lạng-son).[168]

Zhu Yuanzhang depicts Qubilai's invasion as a success that nearly destroyed the Trần dynasty and successfully compelled the Trần king's capitulation. Zhu Yuanzhang discusses repeatedly and at some length Qubilai's abortive expeditions against Japan, yet he refers only minimally to Mongol attacks on Trần territory. He does not describe the size or skill of Yuan dynastic armies; he does not explain away their defeat; he does not offer comment on the abortive invasions' relevance for contemporary Ming-Trần relations.

How do we account for the silence? Perhaps Zhu Yuanzhang did not believe the Mongol interlude resonated strongly with contemporary Vietnamese.[169] More likely, Zhu Yuanzhang felt no need to threaten Trần rulers by recounting Mongolian power or to deflate inflated egos by explaining away Mongol defeats as he did in communications with Koryŏ and Japanese authorities. Despite tensions over succession within the Trần ruling house, Zhu Yuanzhang did not threaten invasion nor did he seem concerned with restoration of

[165] *MTZSL*, 53.6b–7a, pp. 1044–45; 53.9a–b, pp. 1049–50. Months later, the newly enthroned Great Việt king sent trained elephants to the Ming court. Editors of the *Ming Veritable Records* explain the elephants as a celebratory gift commemorating Zhu Yuanzhang's "defeat of the steppe," presumably the 1370 victory at Yingchang. See *MTZSL*, 60.8a, p. 1181.

[166] Yamamoto Tatsurō, *Annanshi kenkyū*, pp. 270–71.

[167] This is Trần Nhân Tông (1258–1308, r. 1270–93).

[168] *MTZSL*, 250.4a–b, pp. 3621–22.

[169] In 1383, 1384, and 1386, the Trần court submitted eunuchs to the Ming throne. See *MTZSL*, 155.1b, p. 2412; 169.4b, p. 2580; 179.8b, p. 2718. Great Yuan-Trần precedents are not mentioned.

Great Việt-Great Yuan ties.[170] The Trần ruling house had been the first in Eurasia to recognize the Ming dynasty.

The standard Vietnamese chronicle for this period, *The Complete Work on the Historical Records of the Great Việt* (*Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*), sheds little light on either the Ming court's approach to Chinggisid history or the Great Việt response.[171] In a series of terse entries from the 1350s to the 1360s, it notes the names of Chinese warlords and their regimes, occasional requests for marriage and military alliances, and intensified military preparations along the northern border prompted by spreading rebellion in China.[172] The following is the sum total of the account of the Great Yuan's collapse found in *The Complete Work on the Historical Records of the Great Việt*. "This year, the Yuan perished."[173] It offers similarly laconic descriptions of the Ming dynasty's rise.[174] None of the texts of Zhu Yuanzhang's communications to the Trần throne are included. Nor do comments about the Mongol legacy appear.

The sole, partial exception is an entry from late 1397. It reads:

> The Ming sent two men, Big Hu/Hồ and Little Hu/Hồ of the Yuan ruling family, for settlement. The throne bestowed on Big Hu the name Di Fuji/Rịa Phục Cơ and on Little Hu the name Di Baolang/Rịa Bảo Lang.[175]

Hu/Hồ is a Sinitic surname, but it is also the term translated as "northern horsemen" throughout this and other chapters. So, Big and Little Northern Horseman (or "Big and Little Mongol") were exiled and put under the supervision of the Trần throne, which civilized them by granting more elevated Sinitic names. Big Hu/Hồ's name means loosely "restoration of the foundation," foundation often referring to dynastic foundation, but here perhaps simply suggesting a new beginning. As the Tamma example shows, the Ming court repeatedly relocated high-profile prisoners, especially Chinggisid nobles, to neighboring countries. No reference to the exile of Big Hu/Hồ and Little Hu/Hồ appears in the *Ming Veritable Records*.

[170] The Great Việt was one of fifteen countries that Zhu Yuanzhang declared were not be invaded. On the Ming founder's dealing with the Great Việt court, especially tensions over succession and border demarcation, see Fuma, "Ming-Qing China's Policy," pp. 3–5; Hentona Chōyū, *Mindai sakuhō*, 36–65. Wan Ming ("Mingchu Zhongwai guanxi kaolun," pp. 73–74) notes Zhu Yuanzhang's choice to send "imperial letters" to the Koryŏ throne and less personal "imperial edicts" to the Trần ruling house. She suggests that Koryŏ's more thorough integration into the Mongol empire worried Zhu Yuanzhang. Thus, he worked harder to secure its allegiance.

[171] First compiled late in the thirteenth century, *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* was repeatedly updated from the fifteenth to nineteenth century and survives in more than a dozen versions. See *DVSK* (Chongqing and Beijing, 2015), vol. 1, pp. 1–4.

[172] *DVSK*, vol. 2, pp. 362–75. [173] *DVSK*, vol. 2, p. 375. [174] *DVSK*, vol. 2, p. 375.

[175] *DVSK*, vol. 2, p. 415.

Conclusion

The last two chapters have traced how Zhu Yuanzhang discussed the Great Yuan in correspondence with the Timurid dynasty, the Moghul khanate, the Koryŏ dynasty, Japanese military and imperial authorities, and the Trần ruling house. The duration and intensity of the Mongol empire's influence differed for each of these polities. Some had been subject to highly destructive and repeated military incursions. Some had come under sustained Mongol rule (whether direct or indirect). Still others were products of the Mongol empire's collapse that retained strong ideological, personnel, and institutional ties to the Chinggisid enterprise. Although perceptions of the Mongol empire varied according to individual polity (and within each polity), everyone knew the Chinggisids.

Despite its efforts to minimize or marginalize the Great Yuan, the Ming court understood that the Chinggisid enterprise remained relevant not just for the Ming dynasty and Mongols on the steppe but also for nearly all rulers of eastern Eurasia. Its relevance was threefold. First, it was important as a contemporary regime. Thus, the Ming court offered news and interpretations of major military and political events related to the Great Yuan. Second, consequences of Mongol rule played out in direct and observable ways for the Ming and its neighbors, including issues of repatriation, borders, and jurisdiction. Zhu Yuanzhang regularly explained the origins of such questions in light of Great Yuan actions. Third, the Mongol empire had created powerful historical memories for nearly all Eurasia. The Ming court often referred to such memories when explaining its own actions and expectations. Put differently, the correspondence examined in this chapter reflects the Ming court's implicit acknowledgement of the Great Yuan's broad relevance as a contemporary polity, an explanation for the current geopolitical landscape, and historical memory.

Further, the Ming court understood that the Chinggisids' importance among neighbors was not homogeneous. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors developed a core set of talking points, but the early Ming court was sensitive to the needs and perceptions of diverse audiences. Further, it commanded sources of information about contemporary circumstances and historical experiences/memories of a broad range of neighbors. The argument here is NOT that the Ming court possessed equally accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive intelligence on everyone. Physical proximity, strategic priority, and language produced obvious differences. However, the correspondence in this chapter reminds us about the early Ming court's engagement in the broader world.

As the preceding shows, reconstruction of the early Ming court's engagement is hampered by the nature of surviving materials. Extant sources from and about Koryŏ are relatively rich. They include portions of documents from

both the Ming and Koryŏ governments as well as quasi-official works such as poems of parting. Correspondence between the Ming throne and other rulers is more limited. Often times we have only the texts issued by Zhu Yuanzhang. Examining how, why, and when documents from the Trần ruling house, for instance, to the Ming throne disappeared is a fascinating question that would no doubt pay rich dividends. This fragmentary record is not ideal, but neither is it fatal for our purposes here, exploration of the early Ming court's use of the Mongol legacy in relations with its neighbors.

Zhu Yuanzhang's invocations of the Great Yuan were ultimately all about him: his rise, his legitimacy, his special fate, his power, and his expectations for obedience, allegiance, and deference. General rhetorical themes such as the limited duration of the northern horsemen's fortunes or the inescapable nature of Heaven's retribution were tied to specific, contemporary issues that Zhu Yuanzhang considered important. The amount of ink and paper Zhu Yuanzhang devoted to discussion of the Mongol legacy in his correspondence only loosely reflected its relative importance for the addressee. Korea's partial incorporation into the Mongol empire created a dense network of personnel, political, and security ties that shaped the Koryŏ court for generations. In contrast, Japan, protected by an ocean, had entirely escaped Mongol rule and suffered only limited damage to a small portion of its coast. Yet Zhu Yuanzhang discussed the abortive attacks at length. He did so in the belief that historical memory of Qubilai's fleets shaped Japanese attitudes toward his Ming dynasty. Finally, the Trần ruling house had fought several large-scale campaigns against Mongol forces, which had major economic, military, and political consequences. In surviving letters to the Trần dynasty, however, Zhu Yuanzhang referred only minimally to the Great Yuan, presumably in the belief that other forms of rhetoric would prove more efficacious.

Having completed our extended but still far from comprehensive tour of Eurasian courts' memories of the Mongol empire and their diverse Chinggisid narratives, let us now return to some of the overarching questions raised in the Introduction.

Conclusion

Preceding chapters have tried to offer a few alternate perspectives on the Mongol empire (especially the Great Yuan), the early Ming court, and Eurasia in the fourteenth century. They can be summarized into the following three points. First, for much of the fourteenth-century world, the Mongol legacy was a common reference point. From Cairo to Kaegyŏng, from southern Siberia to northern Vietnam and beyond, the Mongol empire's imprint was deep and distinct. The campaigns of initial conquest were often massively destructive. Subsequent rule frequently disrupted established structures of power. In areas subject to their rule, Mongols used relay stations, integrated tax systems, revenue sharing, military units such as *tümen*, royal marriage alliances, and others institutions of empire to facilitate movement, extract resources, and integrate personnel.[1] This resulted in extensive migrations of both conquerors and the conquered. The Mongolian diaspora meant elite lineages with keen concern for their place in the empire and their status vis-à-vis other elites spread far beyond the Mongolian steppe. Their memories of the Chinggisid enterprise were an integral element of identity and a form of political and social capital. Even for those who did not experience physical relocation, Mongol rule often challenged previous notions of proper social, political, and cultural order. Such challenges variously prompted fierce resistance and eager embrace; they also stimulated efforts to explain, even rationalize, the new order. The best-preserved traces of such efforts are written works that range from official chronicles and genealogies to essays, poems, monastery steles, and funerary epitaphs. Such materials all reveal an effort to make sense of the new world and the author's place in it. In toto, these were the first generations of the Chinggisid narrative. They contributed to a broad and varied memory of the Mongol empire.

When the great Chinggisid houses fell into decline, the Mongol empire did not vanish. Ideas such as the "natural" territorial expanse of individual Chinggisid houses, attributes of rulership, the basis of allegiance, and relations

[1] Martinez, "Institutional Development."

among "native" and "Other" populations developed under Mongol rule lingered. Institutions such as royal guards and *tümens*, which had created new patterns of social organization and identity firmly rooted in the state, frequently outlasted central governments. Zhu Yuanzhang sought to succeed to relations with the Koryŏ court and Tibetan prelates established by the Great Yuan. In building his dynasty, Tamerlane drew on lineages developed during the Chinggisid enterprise. Much the same could be said of Moghul khans and their advisors. In other words, the empire's ruination opened the way for ambitious men and women to rework ideas and institutions. The complicated process of restoration, adaptation, rejection, and appropriation varied widely. The end results differed markedly. But in the decades following the collapse of the great Chinggisid houses, many of the basic conceptual and institutional building blocks were broadly recognizable – both to us now and to contemporaries at the time – as elements of the Mongol empire's legacy. My account has accentuated the ways actors used the Chinggisid legacy to advance their interests, but patterns of the Mongol empire informed contemporary perceptions of "what should be" and "what could be" for the first generation of post-empire rulers and elites.

Even allowing for the indigenization of Mongol rule to Persian, Tibetan, or Chinese traditions during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, a striking body of shared of ideas, institutions, and personnel survived the empire's fall. Thus, when Tamerlane, Khiżr Khwāja, or Zhu Yuanzhang spoke at home and abroad of Chinggis Khan and his descendants, they rightly assumed that nearly all audiences would understand. When Zhu Yuanzhang invoked the end of the Mongols' fortune, he felt confident that leaders from Naghachu in Liaodong to Tamerlane in Samarqand would grasp his meaning. He calculated that invocation of the Mongols' military campaigns of the thirteenth century would make his point in diplomatic communications with late fourteenth-century Korean and Japanese authorities. The network of Great Yuan personnel and institutions remained densest (and best documented) among the Ming dynasty's closest neighbors, like Liaodong, Mongolia, and Yunnan. Similar circuits existed between the Ming dynasty and more distant polities such as the Moghul khanate and the Timurid dynasty, but they seem to have been less robust and are certainly far less documented, which itself may reflect their diminution, which likely predated the great Chinggisid houses' decline.

In other words, the early Ming court told the story of the Mongol empire's rise, glory, and fall so frequently because it had such broad application. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors used their Chinggisid narrative to: legitimate the Ming dynasty's seizure of power; show that Great Yuan restoration was impossible; demonstrate that allegiance to the Ming throne was wise; and illustrate that disregard of Zhu Yuanzhang's wishes would end in disaster.

The reason that the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative could be used to persuade audiences at home and abroad, from Samarqand to Kyoto, is that the Mongol empire was a common reference point for all Eurasia.[2] Everyone had his version of the Mongol enterprise, but there was enough commensurability to facilitate communication across Eurasia, especially during the first century after the Mongol empire's collapse. We often associate the early Ming with rejection of foreign influences and the restoration of a purer or more traditional (whatever that might mean) Chinese order. However, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors understood that the Ming dynasty existed in the Mongol empire's shadow and sought to exploit that fact to advance their interests.

Second, campaigns of persuasion were a major feature of the early Ming court. Exclusive attention to the early Ming court's authoritarian nature misses one of its most striking features. Scholars have drawn insightful portraits of the Ming dynasty's founding emperor, analyzing his childhood, his family life, and his rule. They trace how political, social, religious, intellectual, military, and environmental factors shaped his worldview, his relations with officialdom, and his understanding of his role in the polity. Such work highlights Zhu Yuanzhang's strong sense of mission and his self-perception as teacher to the realm. Such a perspective makes clear why he felt compelled to take decisive action, including sanguinary purges and brutal torture. Only he could ensure dynastic order.

Less appreciated is the Ming founder's lifelong commitment to persuasion. His earliest efforts grew out of a competitive age of military conflict and diplomatic negotiation. Even after eliminating most rivals, Zhu Yuanzhang understood that there were no guarantees that subjects, much less neighboring rulers, would recognize his rule, obey his directives, or offer their allegiance. This book has shown that Zhu Yuanzhang crafted arguments for audiences at home and abroad. Such arguments invoked enduring moral principals, personal responsibility, and inescapable cosmic order. They also appealed to self-interest, including political status, economic advantage, and preservation of family. That such arguments went hand in hand with military force, torture, and material incentives should not obscure Zhu Yuanzhang's efforts to win allegiance and obedience through persuasion.

Attention to the early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative offers insight into the fears and concerns of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors. The narrative was created to justify and legitimate the rise of the Ming dynasty, most especially the rise of Zhu Yuanzhang. As noted, it was intended to rationalize and facilitate the decision of individuals' and groups' to abandon the Great Yuan and serve the Ming dynasty. The narrative highlighted the Great Yuan's rise

[2] Shea ("Mongol Cultural") shows how the early Ming and Timurid courts drew on the Mongol empire's "Eurasian aesthetic."

because Zhu Yuanzhang portrayed his dynasty as the sole rightful successor to Qubilai and his descendants. Simultaneously it was a way to demonstrate respect to a ruling house that many in east Eurasia felt still deserved deference if not obedience. Read against the grain, such appeals reveal the early Ming court's worry that Zhu Yuanzhang was still seen as a rebel of low origin who lacked sufficient standing to command recognition as Heaven's Son and dynastic ruler.

In fact, one can put the matter much more strongly. In the context of late fourteenth-century Eurasia, Zhu Yuanzhang was the ultimate political outsider. In a Chinggisid world, he lacked even the most basic qualifications as sovereign. Not a single drop of Chinggisid blood flowed through his veins. He had no Chinggisid wife and thus could not claim to be an imperial son-in-law. There was no Chinggisid noble in whose name and authority he exercised power. He had never held a position of even the slightest influence or status in the Great Yuan polity. His rebellion was a clear betrayal of the reigning Great Khan. For years, the Great Yuan and its regional supporters categorically rejected Zhu Yuanzhang's claims to be emperor. The Great Khan did not even deign to return his letters. Only when we grasp just how marginal was Zhu Yuanzhang's status in the shadow of the Mongol empire can we begin to appreciate his claims' audacity and inventiveness. Zhu Yuanzhang's true historical significance becomes clear only when we view him in the broader context of east Eurasia.

The early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative was a series of claims that grew from profound uncertainty about the future. From its earliest days and in obvious contradiction of reality, the Ming throne depicted the Great Yuan's fall as inevitable and irreversible, the clear result of both Toghan-Temür's failed rulership and Heaven's abandonment. The narrative repeatedly noted foreign ruling houses' limited duration. The loss of Daidu in 1368, the abandonment of the Central Plains, and death first of Toghan-Temür, then Ayushiridara, and finally Toghus-Temür, were all offered as iron-clad evidence that the Great Yuan had run its course and lost any semblance of dynastic house. Again, read against the grain, such claims suggest profound worry that audiences at home and abroad believed a Great Yuan restoration was entirely possible. Put simply, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors believed that many people urgently needed to be persuaded to view the Great Yuan and the Great Ming in new lights. The early Ming court was only too aware that there was nothing inevitable or irreversible about the Great Yuan's fall or the Ming dynasty's rise.

Third, the early Ming court was deeply engaged in eastern Eurasia. The expansive Mongol empire and its active promotion of international commerce and relatively free movement of people and goods across Eurasia stands in stark contrast with the early Ming dynasty's maritime prohibitions. This series

of measures sharply curtailed private trade and limited cross-border migration. Despite such draconian policies, Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors worked to shape foreign leaders' perceptions and actions. To be effective, such arguments had appeal to local concerns, which in turn required timely, accurate information about diverse peoples and polities. Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors tailored their messages to particular circumstances, regularly referring to specific conditions of individual rulers and military commanders. He discussed their difficulties and aspirations. He used their friends, relatives, and associates as envoys to make his message more palatable and compelling. All this points to an early Ming court that assiduously gathered military, political, and personal information to make its case. During the late fourteenth century, much such information related to the Mongol empire, or more specifically the Great Yuan. Thus, rather than unilaterally projecting Chinese values on neighboring countries, the early Ming court worked hard to make itself compelling through frequent reference to issues and ideas that resonated with contemporary audiences.

Having recapitulated some of the book's main points, let us take one or two steps back to consider things in a wider perspective. First, perhaps the most obvious question to emerge from this study is why the early Ming court created such a robust Chinggisid narrative. Judging by scholarship to date, the early Ming court's story of the Great Yuan was more developed than any other contemporary, including the Muscovite, Timurid, Moghul, Mongol, Trần, Koryŏ, and Chosŏn courts. Is it a historiographical mirage, reflecting scholars' interests and the vagaries of source survival? Is it a result of the successor regimes' divergent relations to the Mongol empire in general and to the closest Chinggisid house in particular? Can the apparent absence of an explanation of a Timurid or Moghul narrative of Mongol decline be explained as a result of their legitimist posture? Perhaps highlighting Ilkhanid and Chaghadaid decline and fall would have increased the difficulty of restoration. In an analysis of the absence of historical narrative produced by the Golden Horde court, Halperin argues that Mongolian populations considered epics, legends, and genealogies perfectly adequate to legitimate political power and social standing.[3] Perhaps this same reasoning explains why the Moghul court did not produce a Chinggisid narrative resembling that of the Ming dynasty. Discussing Ikhanid chronicles, another scholar similarly highlights the importance of long-standing Persian intellectual and historiographical traditions. He argues, "The overthrow of rulers and changes of dynasty are generally greeted with phrases reminiscent of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* ('Book of Kings'), expressing the sentiment that when Heaven's wheel had determined the end, the eye of wisdom

[3] Halperin, "Missing Golden Horde Chronicles and Historiography," p. 10.

and discernment was stitched up, although general accusations about the failure to heed advice, neglect of the affairs of state, and absorption in private pleasures are also recurring *topoi*."[4]

The founder of the Chosŏn dynasty, established in 1392, and many leading military and civilian figures had direct experience of the Mongol empire. Its immediate predecessor, the Koryŏ dynasty, was thoroughly integrated into the Mongol empire. Yet, the early Chosŏn court was strikingly silent on the Mongol legacy. Why? Would drawing attention to the dynastic founder's close ties to the Great Yuan have compromised his legitimacy in the eyes of audiences at home and abroad? As a result of generations of service as vassals, Muscovite princes too were intimately familiar with the Golden Horde's administrative structures and court culture.[5] Russian accounts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries regularly discuss Mongols but do not acknowledge Mongol sovereignty. Scholars refer to this response as an ideology or conspiracy of silence. Mongol raids might be explained as God's punishment, but there was no effort to explain Mongol rule.[6] Not until the mid-sixteenth century, decades after the collapse of effective Golden Horde control in Russia, did such accounts as *Kazanskaia istoriia* (Kazan History) begin to offer even a relatively straightforward explanation for the Golden Horde's fall – God's grace.[7] Finally, if other first-generation successors in fact did not produce elaborate Chinggisid narratives, what does the well-rounded explanation both of the Great Yuan's rise, glory, and fall and of the Ming dynasty's extraordinary emergence tell us about contemporary Chinese political culture?

Viewed in the context of east Eurasia in the late fourteenth century, certainly the most fundamental reason was Zhu Yuanzhang's striking lack of legitimacy in the Chinggisid world. As noted, he lacked both Chinggisid blood and affinal ties. He did not exercise power in the name of a Chinggisid Great Khan. He failed to win the recognition of the Great Khan, the Prince of Liang, and many Mongol elites from Liaodong to Central Asia. Faced with such daunting political deficits, Zhu Yuanzhang needed to offer intellectual explanations to support his standing on a Eurasian state. The early Ming court's illegitimacy by Chinggisid standards goes a long way toward explaining Zhu Yuanzhang's

[4] Melville, "End of the Ilkhanate and After," p. 318.

[5] Halperin, "Ideology of Silence," p. 460; *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 36–38, 78–79, 107, 109–10; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, pp. 19–26, 31–63; Martin, *Medieval Russia*, pp. 163–260 in passim.

[6] Halperin, "Ideology of Silence"; *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 61–74; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, pp. 144–48.

[7] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 69–73. Russian Orthodox Church accounts of Kazan's fall similarly refer to God's grace and Ivan IV's great faith. See Romaniello, *Elusive Empire*, p. 31. In a 1481 letter to an ally, Ivan III wrote, "Ahmad Khan (leader of the Great Horde) came against me, but all-merciful God wanted to save us from him and did so." Cited in Khodarkovsky, *Steppe Frontier*, p. 80.

singularly robust narrative of decline. Part of the answer is also Chinese political culture, the font from which the majority of the early Ming court's rhetoric originated.

Second, this study has implications for understanding the foreign policy of the Ming dynasty, the most powerful regime in eastern Eurasia. The Ming was the last Chinese imperial dynasty and has often been taken as a proxy for true or traditional Chinese attitudes.[8] Much research on the Ming dynasty's foreign policy centers on its roots in classical Chinese traditions, including realpolitik schools of thought, those committed to the transformative power of virtue and shared values, or some combination of the two. Scholars ask whether Ming foreign policy was essentially idealistic, pacifistic, and defensive or realistic, bellicose, and expansionistic. Seeking an accommodation of the two poles is common.

Perhaps the most common interpretation found in Sinophone scholarship is that the Ming dynasty pursued peaceful relations with its neighbors. The sole exception to this pacific orientation, it is noted, was the use of military force against the Mongols. The problem with such a formulation is that for the early Ming period, the exception was far more important than the rule.[9] The early Ming court was engaged in an open-ended war with the Great Yuan and its affiliates for Zhu Yuanzhang's entire reign. The early Ming court projected massive military force into Liaodong, along the entire Mongolian steppe's southern tier, into the Hexi Corridor, and into Yunnan. The largest campaigns involved 200,000 to 300,000 troops. They led to the permanent expansion of dynastic borders (for instance the incorporation of Liaodong, Yunnan, and Gansu) and a corresponding commitment to lasting state authority in those border regions. This book has focused on the early Ming court's efforts to use rhetoric to achieve its ends, yet it has also repeatedly shown that the use of military force was inseparable from campaigns of persuasion. Military conflict with the Great Yuan and its affiliates constituted an integral part of the early Ming court's identity.

Third, this book is a reminder of how much of "the Ming order" remained unsettled at the time of Zhu Yuanzhang's death. Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly announced that his descendants were to follow his instructions and observe his precedents. Although specialists have warned against taking such statements at face value, it is tempting to assume that he left behind clear policies.[10] Zhu Yuanzhang's frequent proclamations suggest that he had eliminated foreign and domestic enemies and won universal recognition for his regime abroad. The impression of firm policies and enduring relations owes something to later generations that invoked the established practices of dynastic forefathers to

[8] Johnston's *Cultural Realism* is perhaps the most influential such example.
[9] It also omits large-scale military action against both domestic and newly subjugated populations, perhaps most obviously in the southwestern quarter of the Ming polity.
[10] Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State*; "Visions and Revisons"; *Tale of Two Melons*.

justify decisions. However, at the time of Zhu Yuanzhang's death, relations with nearly all neighbors were in flux. Regular official diplomatic ties with Japan had been de facto suspended.[11] Relations with the newly founded Chosŏn dynasty were testy; Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly threatened military action. Despite period gift exchanges, suspicion suffused relations with the Timurid and Moghul polities. Places like Qara-Qoto and the Hexi Corridor in general remained beyond Ming control, as did kingdoms such as Hami and Turpan. In fact, those regions were subject to Chinggisid regional administration. To judge by the *Ming Veritable Records*, stable ties with much of Central Asia did not begin until the fifteenth century.[12] The Prince of Liang's regime fell in 1382, but the Ming military remained bogged down in a quagmire in Yunnan through the remainder of the Hongwu reign.[13] The Ming state would war with polities such as Luchuan far into the fifteenth century. Similarly, the Great Yuan remained the Ming court's great rival long after Zhu Yuanzhang's death. Put simply, in 1398, the future was far from clear. This fundamental uncertainty explains why the early Ming court worked so hard to sell its vision of an obvious, inescapable, inevitable, heaven-ordained order to audiences at home and abroad.

If we were to take even a few more steps back, we would see that the early Ming court's efforts to come to terms with the Mongol empire's legacy were part of a much longer and broader story. Although contemporary perceptions changed markedly, the Great Yuan inheritance remained a major concern for the Ming court throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[14] After Tamerlane's death, the Chinggisid legacy remained important for the Timurid court. Some rulers, like Abū Saʿīd, eliminated Turco-Mongolian practices such as the commercial tax (*tamgha*).[15] However, many continued to appeal to Chinggis' unique stature, even if Tamerlane's charismatic authority grew more prominent.[16] They periodically married Chinggisid women, used the title of Chinggisid son-in-law, and invoked Tamerlane's imperial in-law status.[17] Elements of court culture continued to engage communities that had emerged

[11] Fogel's list of "Japanese Embassies to the Ming Court" begins in 1401. See Fogel, *Articulating*, pp. 110–13.
[12] See Watanabe's list of embassies to and from Islamic countries.
[13] Okuyama, "Unnan heiteisen," table 1, p. 201.
[14] Robinson, "Ming Court and Legacy"; "Justifying Ming Rulership."
[15] Dale, "Later Timurids," p. 202.
[16] Aigle (*Mongol Empire*, pp. 306–14) reviews the evolving synthesis of Chinggisid, Timurid, and Perso-Islamic notions of legitimacy and power.
[17] Tamerlane's grandson, Ulug-Beg, married a Chinggisid woman and revived the title imperial son-in-law, which appears among other titles on coins, a sandalwood chest, a dedication for a luxury copy of astronomical tables, a white nephrite tankard, green jade cups, among others. See Blair, "Timurid Signs," pp. 560, 564–65, 568. Several of Tamerlane's successors either identified themselves as an imperial in-law, included the title when referring to Tamerlane, or both. See Komaroff, "Epigraphy of Timurid Coinage," pp. 220, 221, 223, 224, 226.

out of Chinggisid state institutions. For instance, one objective of the extended itineraries by Timurid ruler Shāhrukh (r. 1405–47) outside the capital was to cultivate ties with "the Turko-Mongol forces that constituted the backbone of [his] military power."[18] A further goal was enhancement of his persona as warrior king and hunter.[19]

Another first-generation polity to rise to regional dominance was the Muscovite state, which had developed in the Mongol empire's wake.[20] Muscovy's variety of Christian rhetoric might not allow open acknowledgment of the legitimacy of infidel Mongol rule, but the court nevertheless "foster[ed] its image as the successor state to the Golden Horde and . . . remain[ed] sensitive to steppe traditions of rule."[21] Another Russian historian similarly argues, "Throughout the sixteenth century, the assumption that Moscow was one of the successors of the Golden Horde served both to justify its expansion southward and eastward and to legitimate its conquests . . . Moscow derived its legitimacy simultaneously from . . . the Christian tradition of Byzantium and the secular tradition of the Golden Horde."[22] One suspects that the continued relevance of the Chinggisid inheritance at the Ming and Muscovite courts was tied to the flow of military resources, primarily light cavalry and horses, out of the steppe into sedentary powers abutting Inner Asia.[23] From the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, political turmoil within Tatar hordes catalyzed distinguished families to seek service with Russian princes.[24] Chinggisid nobles won particularly high rank in Russia. From no later than the second half of the fifteenth century, Tatars converted to Christianity, received estates from the crown, and served as soldiers and officers in the Muscovite armies. They were thoroughly integrated into the military, fighting not only along the southern frontier against other steppe warriors but also in campaigns against Poland, Lithuania, and Livonia.[25] They often served in command positions and

[18] Melville, "Itineraries," pp. 311–12. Dale ("Later Timurids," p. 204) notes that Chaghadaid Mongols controlled the Tashkent region and parts of the western Ferghana Valley.
[19] Melville, "Itineraries," p. 312.
[20] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*; *Tatar Yoke*; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*.
[21] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 100–2; quotation appears on p. 100. Halperin (p. 102) further observes, "Through the seventeenth century, Moscow continued to play upon its tentative status as the Horde's successor in dealing with Inner Asian peoples, and, less often, European powers." See also Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, pp. 177–88.
[22] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe Frontier*, p. 222. Noack ("Volga-Ural Region," pp. 306–7) similarly notes the role of the Orthodox Church in justifying violation of long established patterns of diplomatic interaction with Kazan and other steppe polities. Romaniello (*Elusive Empire*, p. 22) argues that Muscovy drew upon the imperial language of both the Orthodox Byzantine tradition and the Mongol legacy to justify annexation of the Khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Sibir'.
[23] Gommans, "Warhorses."
[24] Vásáry, "Clans of Tatar Descent," pp. 108–9; Khodarkovsky, *Steppe Frontier*, pp. 82–84. Khodarkovsky (*Steppe Frontier*, pp. 202–10) shows that Moscow's appeal as a patron to steppe nobles continued into the eighteenth century, which gave rise to unanticipated problems.
[25] Martin, "Tatars in Muscovite Army."

represented sizable contingents.[26] Although integrated into elite society, affluent Tatars appear to have maintained a preference for livestock production in contrast to a more agrarian orientation of "old" Russians.[27] Nobles received "military commands and lands commensurate with the status of their Chinggisid lineage."[28] In addition, the Muscovite state was tied to the polities that grew from the wreckage of the Golden Horde, such as the "Khanates of Kazan, Kasimov, the Crimea, Astrakhan and Sibir (Siberia), and the Noghai Horde."[29]

Just as Muscovy recruited Tatars into its military, so was Muscovy incorporated into the steppe world. In 1551, the Nogai Mirza Belek Bulat not only addressed Ivan IV as White Prince and White Tsar, he also described him as "son of Chinggis." One specialist argues that leaders of Chinggisid descent (such as the Crimean khans) would not have granted Muscovite rulers such a prestigious pedigree. The same scholar nevertheless concludes, "The Nogai response to Muscovite expansion symbolizes both how intimately tied Muscovy was to the steppe world of the former Golden Horde, and the cultural, political, and ideological limits of Muscovy's involvement. The Muscovite court might be willing to take advantage of Nogai willingness to honor Ivan with Chinggisid blood … but it was not willing to assimilate such assertions into its own titulature, imperial genealogy, or more broadly, political self-consciousness. Muscovy preferred to enjoy its Mongol inheritance without recognizing it."[30]

The Mughal ruling house, descendants of the Timurids, periodically laid claim to the Chinggisid inheritance.[31] The Mughal court also drew on the institutions and practices rooted in the Mongol empire. One scholar suggests that the Mughal court's ambulatory court camp derived in part from Turco-Mongolian traditions.[32] During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, both the Timurid and Moghul khanate courts observed audience protocols for greetings between rulers that had previously been used at the Mongol courts.[33] The Mughal court continued to attract Mongols and Turks – "Tatars" – from Central Asia. These men formed a critical element of the Mughal military, most especially the light cavalry. Writing late in the sixteenth century, the Jesuit observer Monserrate wrote that "strength of the Tartar [i.e., Mughal] armies lies in their cavalry … organized in accordance with the system of Cinguiscanus [Chinggis Khan].[34]

[26] Khodarkovsky, *Steppe Frontier*, p. 83. [27] Martin, "Martin."
[28] Martin, "Tatar Pomeshchiki," p. 114. Halperin (*Russia and the Golden Horde*, p. 113) notes that even as hostility toward Islam and the Mongols intensified in the sixteenth century, in Russia, "Mongol ancestry was as prestigious as German, Latin, or Greek."
[29] Vásáry, "Jochid Realm," p. 85. [30] Halperin, "Ivan IV," p. 497.
[31] Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*.
[32] Richards, "Formulation of Imperial Authority," p. 136. See also Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, pp. 109–11; Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, pp. 192–93; Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, pp. 71–75.
[33] Mano, "Jūgo jūroku seiki." [34] Wink, *Akbar*, p. 23.

The Mongol legacy was a shared feature of re-imperialization throughout much of Central Eurasia during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, from the Uzbeks and the Zünghars to the Eastern Mongols and the Qing dynasty.[35] Indeed, the early modern period witnessed a restoration of Chinggisid sovereignty in Central Asia.[36] The Mongol legacy's prominence for the Qing court and its relations with Mongolian, Tibetan, and Central Asian elites from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries is the most obvious – but far from only – such example. From the sixteenth to eighteenth century, the Qing, Mughal, Ottoman, Safavid, and Russian courts variously appropriated the Mongol legacy to serve their own particular concerns and needs. Preservation of the Chinggis Khan's laws (*jasaq* or *yasa*) or even banquet etiquette carried an undeniable cachet long after his empire had vanished.

Often overlooked in these long-term historical developments is the contribution of the first generation of courts to emerge after Mongol power's collapse in the fourteenth century. They were the first to develop political, military, and rhetorical strategies to harness the Chinggisid legacy to dramatically different conditions. The first and most obvious of these changes was that the Mongols, even in the aggregate, no longer controlled Eurasia.[37] The second important difference was that the Timurid and Ming courts governed broad lands and diverse populations, including steppe communities, but they did not seek the continent-spanning domination of the thirteenth-century Mongols. Tamerlane campaigned widely but made minimal efforts at long-term rule in more distant territories such as the Qipchak steppe. The campaign to China came at the very end of his life. In other words, they offered an example of how to root essential elements of dynastic legitimacy, indeed identity, in the Chinggisid legacy without committing themselves to restoration of the entire Mongol empire. Thus, first-generation courts like the Ming and Timurids demonstrated that even in an age when Chinggisids no longer dominated the world, non-Mongol ruling houses that were based outside the steppe and derived their legitimacy in large part from indigenous cultural traditions could still turn the Mongol legacy to great advantage.

This book has highlighted the ways that the Mongol legacy was a shared reference point across much of eastern Eurasia in the fourteenth century. Subrahmanyam warns against assuming comprehensive or all-encompassing connections within Asia. Speaking of Mughal elite, which certainly ranked

[35] Millward, "Qing Formation," esp. pp. 112–13. Aigle (*Mongol Empire*, pp. 314–22) traces developments into the twentieth century. Biran (*Chinggis Khan*, pp. 137–62) reviews the many ways Chinggis Khan's legacy was later put to use.

[36] McChesney, "Chinggisid Restoration."

[37] Manz ("Empire of Tamerlane," p. 290) argues that the Timurid dynasty developed a new model that allowed "the continued use of Mongol prestige within an Islamic society no longer ruled by Chinggisids."

high in cosmopolitanism and diversity, he observes, "If there were some extraordinarily powerful networks and circuits that crossed early modern political boundaries in Asia, whether for political, military or commercial reasons, we must also be aware of the limits of these networks and circuits. Not everything was connected, and not all of the time."[38] The Chinggisid inheritance, however, is a critically important example of a tie that did connect much of Asia. It was broadly comprehensible to courts from Egypt, Delhi, Sarai and Samarqand to Hami, Beijing, Kaegyŏng, and Hanoi.[39] The early Ming court's Chinggisid narrative often failed to persuade. During the last decades of the fourteenth century, those failures reflect differences of interest and perspective rather than lack of connections. The nature and depth of connections differed widely. The early Ming court was more informed about developments in places like Liaodong and Koryŏ than it was about events in Qara-Qoto. Surviving evidence suggests networks of information and personnel among Nanjing, Qara-Qorum, and Samarqand but they seem more attenuated than those closer to centers of Ming dynastic power.

Finally, global histories often take as a given that China withdrew from the world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, facilitating Western Europe's rise to dominance and leading to the creation of the modern world. Close examination of the Ming court's understanding of the legacy of the Mongol empire and the resultant Mongolian diaspora, however, forces a reconsideration of China's place in the world. It makes clear that in the late fourteenth century, the Ming was not isolated, that the Ming court understood that it was one among several rival centers of power and authority – even while it refused to acknowledge this publicly – and that it competed with both the great Mongol empire's memory and later lesser Mongolian polities for status and power in Eurasia. Appreciation of the early Ming court's engagement forces us to reconsider later developments. Contextualization of the Ming within Eurasia also makes clear that Timurid, Moghul, Muscovite, and Korean courts were often wrestling with similar challenges. To understand (and make understandable) Chinese history, we need to combine a sharp and critical textual focus with a more encompassing perspective of China's relations with its neighbors and the wider world. Thinking about the big picture makes us question our sources and the story they want to tell, while reexamining all sources, whether texts, archeological evidence, or paintings, makes us rethink the big picture.

[38] Subrahmanyam "One Asia, or Many?," p. 33

[39] Ho ("Inter-Asian Concepts") and Duara ("Asia Redux") make highlight the depth and breadth of ties connecting both historical and contemporary Asia.

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Abbreviations

BTGZ *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan*. Edited by Beijing tushuguan, guji chuban bianjizu. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987–99.

CHIA *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia, The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo, Allen Frank, and Peter Golden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

CHC The Cambridge History of China. Denis Twitchett and John Fairbank, general editors Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978–.

CWS *Chosŏn wangjo sillok T'aejo sillok*. Rpt. Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1955–58.

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DVSK *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*. Ngô Sĩ Liên, editor. Rpt. Chongqing: Xinan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015.

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SKCM *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu*. Edited by *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* bianzuan weiyuanhui. Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1995–97.

SKJH *Siku quanshu jinhuishu congkan*. Edited by *Siku quanshu jinhuishu congkan* bianzuan weiyuanhui. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1998.

SLQJ Song Lian (1310–81). *Song Lian quan ji*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1999.

XLZC *Xiaoling zhao chi*. By Zhu Yuanzhang. Rpt. in *Mingchao kaiguo wenxian*. Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1966, vol. 4. Rpt. in *Guojia tushuguan cang Xijian Mingshi shiji jicun*, compiled by Guojia tushuguan fenguan. Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2003, vol. 8.

XXSK *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*. Edited by *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* bianzuan weiyuanhui. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995–2002.

YHB Shen Defu. *Wanli yehuo bian*. 1619. Rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997.

YNJW Zhang Dan. *Yunnan ji wu chao huang*. Rpt. in SKCM, shi 45; YSC, vol. 4.

YS *Yuan shi*. 1360–70. Edited by Song Lian et al. Rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976.

YSC *Yunnan shiliao congkan*. Edited by Fang Guoyu, et al. Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe, 1998–2001.

YSTBJ Wang Shizhen. *Yanshan tang bie ji*. 1590. Rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985.

YWHJ *Yuwai Hanji zhenben wenku*. Edited by *Yuwai Hanji zhenben wenku* bianzuan chuban weiyuanhui. Chongqing: Xinan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008–2012.

YYZH *Yuanshi yanjiu ziliao huibian*. Edited by Yang Ne. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014.

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